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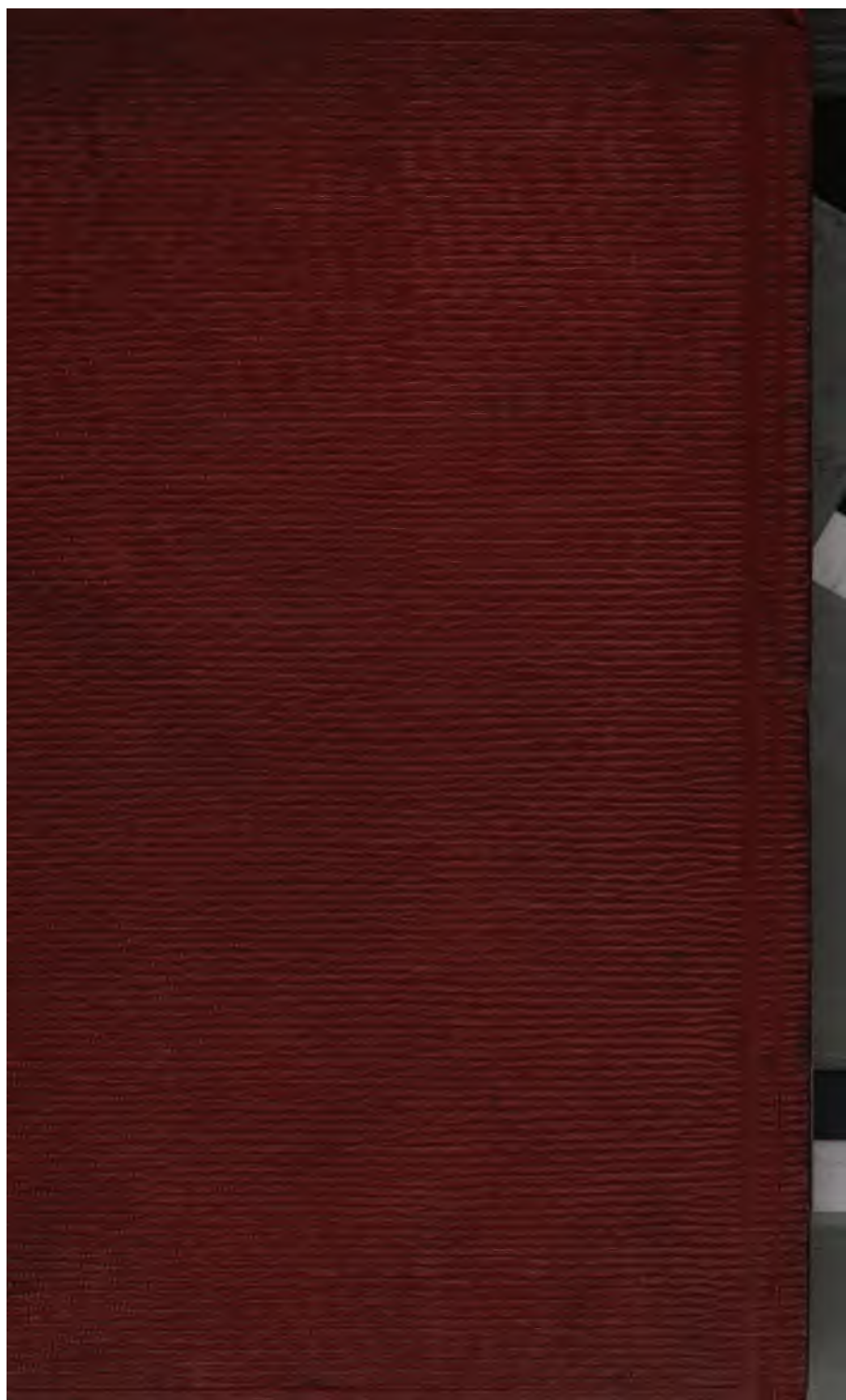
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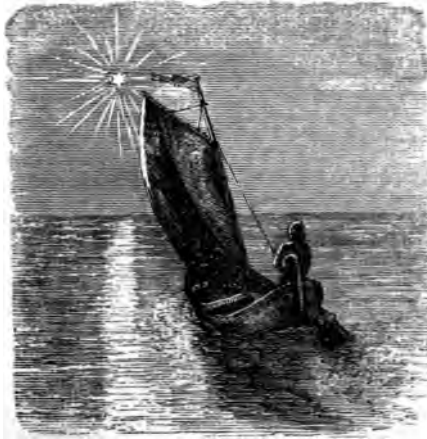
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5

PEN AND PENCIL
PICTURES.

BY
THOMAS HOOD.



Second Edition, Revised.

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INSCRIPTION.

TO

K—— R——

THIS VOLUME IS, WITH ALL BEST WISHES,

DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR,

TOM HOOD.



OH, Gentle-hearted Reader,
Whenever herein you look—
Believe me—the heart of the writer
Is pulsing throughout the book.

Like the strings of the minstrel's lyre,
The chords of his inmost soul—
His gladness—his love—his sorrow—
Have blended to form the whole!

And if aught should move you to weeping,
In reading the volume o'er,
The writer's tears—believe me—
Have dropt on the page before.

And if you are moved to smiling,
When a merry jest you note,
The writer's heart—believe me—
Was smiling, too, when he wrote.

Then grant him what he is seeking—
Not to Honour does he pretend
As one of the Teachers and Poets,
But simply to be as a Friend!



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PEN AND PENCIL PICTURES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages are submitted to the public in the humble hope that, for a few hours, to a few readers, they may afford some slight pleasure and amusement. Should they do so their mission will be fulfilled! Written at spare times, and being only passing fancies photographed by the chemistry of pen and ink as they flitted by, their aim is no higher than to distract attention from the footfalls of Goodman Time, when to weary ears he seems to have dropt, from the gallop, canter, trot, amble, and all the other faster paces of Rosalind's catalogue, into a tiresome plodding, or worse still, appears to have gone dead-lame.

To those then with whom that gentleman, whose

forelock the old proverb somewhat rudely advises us to assault, has fallen into this shuffling gait, this small volume may prove not unacceptable; and let those, who would criticise too harshly, remember that it does not profess to be a laboured work of years aiming at some great purpose—but is merely a collection of sketches—the gradual growth of spare hours similar to those which they are intended to enliven.

The coral reef rises slowly, atom by atom, from the depths of the sea. Around it, in the misty green light of the waters, the strange monsters of Ocean poise upon wing-like fins—the golden and fairy-hued fishes of the tropical seas dart to and fro among its branches, and beneath it—red, green, and purple—wave the wonderful sea-blossoms—or more wonderful still, the living flowers the anemonies and a thousand nameless zoophytes open their petal-limbs and thrust their “fairy horns through their dim water-world.” The architects are only minute—almost invisible—insects! They toil day by day, and year by year, building upward through the sea.

Nothing know they of the world above the waters, save perchance what they hear from the elfin Nautilus, when, at the approach of the tem-

pest, he furls his tiny sails and ships his oars and sinks down—ever down to the silent dim depths of the sea.

Save this they know nothing of the world above, and yet they toil on, until at length emerging from the waves, they behold the great golden sun shining upon them from the azure of a tropical sky!

Anon upon the reef is drifted a tress of sea-weed—the fragment of a wreck—a broken branch—and ere long a weary sea-bird folds its white wings and rests there, bearing in its bill a seed-pod—or a single grain of wheat, which falling there takes root. Meanwhile the ocean goes on casting its waifs and strays upon the rock, and so the islet grows!

Then long years after comes a stately vessel, and the watchers from her deck behold a little fairy island, bright with emerald turf and nodding with shady palms, and spreading trees “the leafy homes” of a myriad bright-hued birds.

Safe in the glassy bay the vessel lies becalmed, though loud roar the breakers beyond the reef—tossing their angry foam far inland, and sprinkling with briny dew the soft verdant lawns, where lie the sailors wrapt in dreamy quiet, like Ulysses’ mariners among the lotos boughs.

And yet that little Eden in the sea is merely the work of invisible creatures, who patiently toiled upward through the dim uncertain gleam of the waters—through storm and tempest—seeking for “light—more light!”

So, in the depths of the human mind, fancies—unseen architects—are ever framing bright fabrics. Slowly, day by day, they build until at length their completed task is brought into the light of day.

The Ocean of Life adds its waifs and strays—its experiences and warnings, in the wrecks of visionary hopes and fears, and Love folds his bright pinions, brooding over the heart and sowing the seeds of happiness and beauty.

Built thus imperceptibly, and unwatched amid the storms and dim uncertain gleamings of the Ocean of Life—aiming at “light—more light” has this work come to fulfilment: and if amid the tempests of the world one weary heart finds an anchor for one short hour, and drinks peace or enjoyment from its pages—if one weather-tossed bark finds for a time a safe haven in the bay of the Coral Isle—will you say that the coral insects have toiled to no purpose—that the fancies have fashioned in vain?

THE
TWILIGHT MUSINGS OF AN OLD MAN.

CHAPTER I.

“ Ah! distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the
floor!”

THE RAVEN.

“ Deep as love—
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life! the days that are no more!”

TENNYSON.

“ All, all are gone, the old *familiar* faces!”

LAMB.

I REMEMBER—many things—and many men.
You will find me a garrulous old man, yet I was
not always so. I remember—yes, remember *well*—
the time when I was a boy—a youth, silent and
reserved; oh, how long ago! I remember my

school-days—the days of my youth—the days of my manhood! Yes, “I remember,” it is the burden of an old man’s song, ever recurring. And I pray God earnestly, if it be His good pleasure, that I may never lose the blessed memories of the past. Oh! they are musical, those two words. And memory is, indeed, a good gift—like the voiceless echo, that haunts your brain, of the song that some loved voice has sung. I remember when such songs were ringing in my ears—morning, noon, and night—never tiring. I remember her who sang them. And what is it that strikes against my hand as I raise it to brush—it cannot be a *tear* from my eyelid? A locket, and within it a curl of soft brown hair. Ah! that voice was silent for ever when that dark tress was severed. I remember when I told my love to her first. It was not a glowing sunset (as I then thought it was); no, it was a calm autumn twilight, when only the highest clouds retained traces of the departed sun in bright spots. My memory has such bright spots too, and this is one of them. I remember her standing beneath the beautiful white jasmine, with its silvery stars, and its perfume, sweet as the memories of the past—with her deep, clear eyes, and her soft brown hair; and she was singing—she loved singing, and

I loved singing too, for I loved her, and she was an embodied song. Alas! they are only the echoes of that song that now die along the deserted chambers of my heart. But I remember what she sang—

“He came to me to woo me,
And he whispered low unto me,
And he knelt adown before me,
As though he would adore me,
And he said, ‘Oh, can you love me,
Can you love as I love you?’”

“And I bent me down and told him,
How dear my heart did hold him,
And I blessed him, and I praised him,
And from his knees I raised him,
And I said, that I could love him,
Could love *him* as he loved *me*!”

And then I drew nearer, and repeated low the words she had sung. I did so, scarcely knowing what I did. And I said, “Oh! can you love me—can you love, as I love you?” And I remember how she turned to me, and how I led her into the orchard, and there, amid the shady trees, whose fruit was rivalled in blushes by my darling’s cheeks,

there she told me all her love; and when I asked her if she could love me as I loved her, she said—“Oh! far, far more.” And I remember then was our first quarrel, for I said *that* was impossible. And yet, I think, we quarrelled more for the sake of making it up again.

But the fire is burning low, and I shall go to my bed, and in the morning I shall awake, and know that an angel has kissed me in my slumbers, for my pillow is bedewed with tears that I do not think I shed. Do not smile at what you may call an old man's fancies, for they are dear to me. I have no friends but those who are now angels of light, and *they* loved me so fondly when living, they cannot but visit me sometimes now. Yet it is a dream—life is a dream—and now the last spark has died away on the hearth, and I am weary! Ah! I remember a time when I was not so easily wearied; and yet I still love to sit here before the fire, that flickers, and fades, and expires like a young man's hopes. I love to think of *my* young hopes, and those who shared them: sitting here till I fall asleep and dream of the blessed past, and I awake to the caresses of *her* dog, now old and grey like his master. Ah! I remember the little, low green

wicket, that did not bar his entrance to a white cottage. Oh! how well I remember that cottage. The sweet jasmine over the porch was a slip of the one beneath which she stood on that calm autumn evening. And that cottage is not altered; it stands as it stood *then*—then, when my hopes vanished like a bubble, and like the bubble's hues were the brightest ere they faded for ever. I love that little white house well: without, in the garden, the flowers roam at will, and the fir-trees on the lawn are now nearly hid by the ivy that we planted, then but a little slip, which we brought from Berry Pomeroy, in the brightest week of my life, when first we were wedded. Well do I remember that day. We wandered through the plantation till we came suddenly upon a ruined tower that the ivy clung to fondly, as my memory clings to these dear recollections. And the sun came streaming through the loop-holes and gilded the old ruins, till they looked as they must have done when the banquet was in those halls, and the music sounded through the oaken roofs, and the cressets and the torches gleamed on the grey stones as the slow-setting sun did then. And we plucked it in the deserted "Lady's Bower," with laughter and merriment; and little did we then think, that when

the hand that plucked it was in the grave, that little root would have climbed to the top of the tall trees, and have mingled its rustlings with the sighing of the firs. And we returned to our little humble home as gladly as my thoughts come back to it again now. But the garden is altered since that time, and the roses shed their leaves over the weed-encumbered ground, and the double-daisies that we had planted in the borders, the little offering of a cottage child in gratitude to my darling, have regained their wild simplicity.

There were many simple flowers there, for her kind heart did not prize them for their worldly value, but for their associations; and, therefore, many a wild flower blossomed there that would hardly have found place elsewhere. There was a blue corn-flower that little Amy Lloyd brought, after my darling had been telling her some fairy tales; and Amy said it was the flower the Princess Blurette had been changed into; and I remember my darling kissed her, and said she would keep it for her sake; and the flower is blooming now, but the hand that planted it is cold in death. All the flowers are growing wild without, forgetting that dear hand

that loved to tend them. Within, in the silent rooms, all remains unchanged; and the world rolls on, and passes by, in ceaseless tide without; but that room stays for ever the same, and shall do so until I close my eyelids to wake to an eternity of joy. I know that when I am lying beneath the green sod in the churchyard, strange faces will gleam in those rooms—strange voices sound in that cottage—strange hands will work strange changes, and desecrate what I hold sacred. But, I know not why it is, these thoughts do not cause me any sadness; perhaps it is because then I shall clasp the jewel to my heart, and the casket will be valueless. But now all is the same—day after day. There stands the harp untouched—there lies the music-book unopened—save when the night-wind sweeps in and turns over the leaves—and then goes away with a new melody, and sings it to the fir-trees on the lawn. And there lies her work-basket on the table, with the reels, and needles, and scissors—once bright, but now rusted by the tears that have fallen upon them. And there, too, would have been her last unfinished piece of work, but it was a labour of love for the poor, and I could not bear that her last work of charity on earth should

not be fulfilled, so I gave it to the poor creature for whom it was intended.

And the pictures hang there still, and in the vases on the mantel-piece are the stalks of the flowers she placed in them; but the petals I remember, a long time ago, lying withered on the marble—all that now remains of some of them is a little dust—the rest have flown away with the night winds that sigh and wander through the house, and up the stairs, to that room with the white-curtained bed, and over the white-draped dressing-table, where the little ruby and blue bottles, and the choice little pieces of rare old china stand unmoved; and the scent has gone from the bottles, as the light and blessing of love has faded from that deserted house. And the winds wander on to the little room with the treasure of untouched toys; and the little cradle in which I dimly remember a baby face,

“That into stillness passed again,
And left a want unknown before!”

A subject—and the only one—to be tenderly touched on, and spoken of, though ever remem-

bered and regretted by her and by me. And I know a green mound in the churchyard, scarce three spans long, and a little stone cross at the head, and on it these words:—

“Here lies, in blest and happy rest,
A blossom bud that ne'er unfurled
To the rough breezes of the world,
But on its mother's breast
Short time did fill two hearts with glee,
Then faded, as though born to be
A link to draw to Heaven,
The mother and the father fond,
Who know their child the skies beyond,
To God's high service given!”

And in moonlight and twilight there is a taller cross, whose shadow seems ever to bend toward that little mound. And they told me when I grew well again that it was *hers*, and they tell me so *now*. But she will return—she will come back to me again! I wander down to the cottage, and ever expect her to come forth to meet me—and she is there. I hear her voice—and it cannot be the breezes that sweep the strings as she used to do. But now the moon is streaming through the window, and the village is silent,

and the shadow of the church tower hides those two crosses that I have been looking at so earnestly: and to-morrow is *the day*—to-morrow—oh that I could sleep it away! to-morrow is the bitter, bitter day that tells me so forcibly—that convinces me, all unwilling as I am—that *there* she *does* sleep at the foot of the cross.

CHAPTER II.

“Thus we, oh Infinite, stand Thee before,
And lay down at Thy feet, without one sigh,
Each after each, our precious things and rare,
Our close heart-jewels, and our garlands fair ;
Perhaps Thou knewest that the flowers would die,
And the long-voyaged hoards turn out all dust,
So take them while unchanged ; to Thee we trust ;
Our incorruptible treasure—Thou art just !”

UNKNOWN.

“The moon made thy lips pale, beloved,
The wind made thy bosom chill ;
The night did shed
On thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou did'st lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.”


SHELLEY.

I REMEMBER this morning, many, many years ago. Frank was in Italy, and I had been expecting

him, and last night, a long time back, he was to have reached London. But the night had been stormy and wild, and the sea had run high, and the poor fishermen had some of them been obliged to leave their huts on the beach, and fly to the top of the rocks; and those on the island had awakened with the rush of waters and fled to their boats; and the surge swept away the huts and nets, and left the rocky islet bare. Trees had been blown over the rocks, and large ones were to be seen in the morning, heaving and tossing on the hardly pacified surges; and the rails at the turning of the drive that stood at the edge of a precipice of eighty feet were blown into the sea. The road went straight on to the white railing, till it looked as though it had led sheer eighty feet into the sea, and then, all at once, it turned, with the palings bounding it on the left, and on the right a dark fir plantation climbed the side of the hill, which sloped upwards to some height. There dwelt the timid rabbits that bounded down, and looked at the sea with their large, wondering eyes, and then flitted back again to their holes. But that night none of them had ventured out of the warren. The very gulls flew to their homes in the rocks, and the white specks, that the blue lightning showed on the sea, were not the

wings of sea-birds, but the sails of distressed ships. Oh, how few ever reached a safe harbour! In the morning I arose, filled with dismal forebodings, and mounted my horse to ride over to B—— for the letters, hoping to hear of my brother.

I remember she came to the gate, and stood there watching me; and Luath, the fine hound, hung back to stay with his mistress, but I called him and he came unwillingly. In turning to call him, I looked at her. There she stood by the green wicket, in her white dress, like a gleam of sunshine; and though it was too far to see them, I knew that her clear, bright eyes were watching me so earnestly; and I came to the bend of the road: and I turned it, and I saw her no more, no more!—yes, I saw her once more! But how blessed to me is the memory of that day, though bitter and inflexible the decree then seemed that made it the darkest day of my life. Still it is blessed when I think how that last day was spent—spent as it should be by one on the point of leaving this world. And in my inquiries for her on the next day, there were few in the village that she had not visited; and where she visited, she was not content with moral teaching and good advice,



but with warm, earnest deeds, and good, kind, Christian gifts.

I rode to the town, but the letters had not arrived. And, oh, Heaven! the anguish I endured in my ride home! I did not think it could be equalled, till I felt agonies, far, far more dreadful.

That night, when I returned home late, she was not there. The next morning she returned not. All that night I searched, and in the morning, wearied out with my exertions, I lay down and fell into a deep sleep; but the search was carried on untiringly.

And there were whispers in the village. The *kind, good* people, came to see me, and "they were sorry." I remember they said, "she was young—giddy; they were sorry for me." But I was angry, God forgive me, and I spake words that I repent of now. But oh! she could not, could not have done so. She, my darling, so good, so true!—Oh, no! Thank Heaven, I did not for a moment doubt her; and I forgive them as a Christian, and pray that they may be forgiven, who wronged her only in thought. In the afternoon, when I awoke, I was called for by a little boy, who came, he said, from his mother—his little sister was dying. They lived

in a small hut on the sea-shore, nearly two miles from my house. He told me that they had expected her down there—she had promised to come two days ago. I needed no further incitement, but leaped on my horse and galloped along the shore. Luath, too, who had been very mournful for the whole day, now strode boldly on in front. A mile and a half were soon passed, when I heard him howl loudly, and saw him dash onwards towards the foot of the cliff. I looked up, and almost expected to see her at the top. But there was nothing there save the few remaining stakes of the palings;—she was not there. And the dog howled again—such a long, mournful cry, human, like the despairing cry of some strong man in his death-throes. I approached, as it were, in a dream—slowly—hesitating; and oh, horror! there lay a human form on the shingle at the foot of the rock, and near it lay scattered the fragments of the little dainties that a small basket, which I almost feared I knew, had contained. Oh! doubt and dread!—I leaped to the ground—I raised it in my arms. One glance—and I remember no more, save a sharp, cold pang through my heart as I fell to the ground, while Luath's long, sad howl rang again in my ears.

A blank follows, and I remember no more dis-

tinctly, save that I dimly recollect lying in a bed, and dreadful creatures were around my pillow, and they gibed and gibbered at me; and I remember too that she tended me. I know that she did. I remember that alone, plainly, of all that happened to me in this half-consciousness. But they told me when I awoke that I had been fevered and delirious for three weeks—and they said she had been buried the day after, I—oh! horror—I found her! But oh! no—no—it was not true—she had tended me in my illness. They told me that I had been delirious. Would that I were so now, if in that delirium she might tend me still. Slowly I recovered my health—my spirits never—though Heaven knows I am not gloomy or despairing. And as I recovered, I saw that I was in the Manor House, not in my little parsonage-house. And they told me Frank was dead; but I was so stunned by my woe, that my heart only throbbed more quickly for the moment, and the tears that had risen in my eyes for her, fell to the memory of my brother. Oh! the long, long months—the slow, slow progress of returning health, and the unutterable weight of woe. And I ordered them to lock up the Parsonage, and touch nothing there. And as soon as I was strong enough, they told me that they had found out that on that day




on which she had promised to visit the sick child, she had gone—she had always performed her promises. And that child was born when our sweet little one smiled upon us for the first time; and that small link had made her love the child, and perhaps caused her not to mention her going to me, for we had few secrets from one another. They said it was supposed, that in going there in the dusk of the evening, she missed the white palings which would have indicated the turn, and had fallen over the cliff. Oh! horrible! horrible—she so tenderly watched and cared for, to lie on those cold, heartless stones for a night and day, unwatched, untended; and the rain beating on that brow, that I would not allow the “winds of heaven visit too roughly.”

At length I grew well, and got down and about again. But I could never endure the sight of those people who lived in the hut on the shore, though I never let them see it, Heaven knows, and I knew it was a sin in the sight of my Creator; and I prayed earnestly for forgiveness; and I took that child (for she recovered and grew up a good girl) as a servant, that the sight of her might be as a penance for my sin. And though her step is light, and her voice sounds joyous, in the house, I never

hear her, or see her, without a feeling, that is like pain, at my heart.

How much can happen in three short weeks ! Poor Frank, what a sad fate was his. He was a noble boy—two years my elder ; and my father, good old man, educated us both mostly at home. Frank was a joyous, gay lad, and looked forward to entering the army. We were both of us very fond of one another, and grew up together, and played together, and fished together—read the same books, followed the same sports and pursuits, and assisted each other in our compositions, for we both of us dabbled a little in poetry ; and I have a whole portfolio of our verses, which I will look out some evening. I often think what a comparison might be made between our verses—as between ourselves—his, gay, fanciful, and fresh—and mine, dim, with a foreshadowing of grief in them. And when I settled in my living, he gave up his ideas of going into the army, and lived in this house, for our much-loved father had gone to sleep quietly, as I hope I shall, when it pleases my Father in Heaven to call me to meet *her*. We lived very happily, my brother and I, for some few years ; and he loved a fair, young girl ; she was so *then*. She lived at the town of B——. He was so gay and joyous, but



too shy to declare his passion for her. I smiled at the excuses he made for visits to B——; his fishing-rod was broken, and it must go into the town, though he had himself mended a similar fracture in mine most admirably the week before; and he was eager about a new book, which, after he had obtained it, lay uncut on the shelves for weeks. And one day he came to me, complaining of ill health, and said he should ride into town to see our good doctor. I laughed then, for he looked well, and there was more than his usual colour in his cheeks. Alas! I did not know it to be but the sign of the disease within, and I thought he had determined to propose to his Mary. And in the evening he returned pale and thoughtful, and I drew him aside and asked him what was the matter. We went into the study, for he was often down with me—the little Parsonage had then a cheerful aspect. How well I remember his words—“Everard, I am dying! slowly, very slowly, but surely! I am consumptive, and my only hope is a visit to Italy.” I burst into tears.

“I am not sorry for myself, but for you, and because this dreadful disease is, I fear, too deeply rooted; and I dare not whisper my love to my

Mary to blight her young days with my doubtful fate.

The noble fellow!—and he never saw her again, until his return home during those three weeks of agony. I went into B—— myself, to see her, and making her promise secrecy, I told her all. Poor girl—she loved him then very much, but she was a young and simple girl that, like the slender reed, bends lowest under misfortune, but only to rise again unscathed. I told her (though it was a painful task) because I did not choose that she should think him false and fickle on account of that which really arose from his great love to her. And he went to Italy, and long after I heard from him that he was coming to England, and was better—much better.

And then came that awful night!

The vessel was so tossed and shaken that he relapsed hopelessly. And when they told him he could not live, the expectation of seeing his Mary died within his heart, and he murmured—“Let me see her ere I die.” And she came, and then he told her how he had loved her; and in a whisper, she told him that she, too, had loved—loved him; and he blessed her, and asked her to lay a tress of

her hair upon his breast in the coffin. And he closed his eyes for ever, folded in the arms of his own Mary. She was inconsolable at the time ; but afterwards, as I got the better of my fever, she recovered her spirits. And I remember, some years after, she was married to another. He was a good man, and a kind ; yet I hardly liked to think of it, but I loved her for my brother's sake ; and she and her children used to come here, for many years, to see me at Christmas ; and they called me their uncle, and I used to dream that they were Frank's—and I forgave her as I knew *he* had done already in Heaven. Now the night is closing in, and the wind is moaning without, grieving for what it did on this day so many years ago. I almost fancy it has never been so fierce since ; but still I cannot bear to hear it. I will go to my lonely pillow—did I say *lonely*? *Oh! it is not so.* And the wind shall then sound in my dreams like the voices of long-departed friends whose faces I remember.

CHAPTER III.


“O, say not so!
Those sounds that flow
In murmurs of delight and woe,
Come not from wings of birds.”

LONGFELLOW.

“They grew in beauty side by side,
They filled one home with glee;
Their graves are severed, far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.”

MRS. HEMANS.

I HAVE been down to that little white cottage, and wandered through the rooms, but she is not there, yet I had hoped to see her to-day, for it is Christmas-day; and last night there were voices carolling under my window that told me of hope, of new life, and how, centuries ago, poor shepherds



watching flocks in the fields saw the bright angels. I almost hoped to see my angel, for *she* is one now. But she was not there. Yet, as I mounted the stairs, I heard a sound that was like the cooing of a baby voice when it first tries to speak—when the rosy little liplets pout with the speech pent-up within them—and I heard the sound of wings, and I hurried up into the bed-room, and a white dove flew out at a broken pane. It left one white feather behind it, and I have it here. I have been to that house again this afternoon, but she was not there. I heard the dove again, and I thought, in a waking dream, that it was the little low voice I had heard—oh! it is an age of grief ago—among the little white curtains of that deserted cradle.

I love that bird, for it has taken up its abode in that cottage. I know she would have loved it too, and would have fed it through the cold winter with her own hand, for it could not have feared her—my Darling—so kind and so gentle, that when she walked on the cliff, the rabbits did not flit away from her, until Luath came up, and *then*, only, they hurried away to bury their fears and their large bright eyes in their holes. I dare not go up to that room to feed it lest it should fear my kindness, and fly away for ever; but to-morrow I will watch

it until it goes, and then I will go up and throw down food for it.

Hark! the bells are ringing for Christmas, as they have rung ever since the church was built. Lights are gleaming in the cottages, merriment and mirth abound throughout the village, and every now and then my heart gives a louder throb; for in this silent old chimney-corner all is still (the ringers are resting just now, and refreshing themselves with "spicy nut-brown ale")—so still, that I can hear my heart beat—so still, that a mouse has run out of his hole to make his Christmas-dinner of crumbs, though he watches me carefully all the time with his bead-like eyes. When every now and then my heart throbs louder, I think it does so instinctively with pleasure, whenever any of my little flock drink to my health. Let them be merry while they may, though many of those little happy circles around the glowing red turf have a vacant seat, that brings a half-suppressed sigh to the lips of those who observe it.

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!"

True, too true! but there are few where all the chairs are vacant, save one—perhaps few in the world. Yet mine are not vacant; no, I see little merry figures of children sitting in them; and I see, dimly, the form of Mary. They are not here; but they speak to me—not aloud in words—but to my heart in thoughts. They remind me of a time, long ago, when they all sat so, and of him who came to see me. Oh! yes, yes; ye need not to remind me! I was not cheerful myself, yet when I saw those children so happy, there was something at my heart that felt like what I had called happiness, when I was a boy; though I could not be sure, it was so long since I had experienced it.

They were happy, very happy, as their silvery laughter rang through these old halls; and I sat here by the fire, listening to their voices, and to the echo of voices, long silent, that seemed to mingle with theirs. And I remember little Frank running up to me with his large, earnest, brown eyes, saying that he wanted to play at hide-and-seek, but was afraid that he might be shut in a box like the one that “our papa had told us of,” in the song about “The Mistletoe Bough.” They gambolled about me, as the butterflies sport around some old willow, and I blessed them in my heart. Now, where are they?

All, save one, have passed from this earth. The cold winter came and killed the butterflies, but the hoary old tree is standing yet.

Three perished in the same year; and one—the last—my favourite little Charlie—while he was here, sickened of the fever. I nursed him day and night. They came to me as I sat by him, in his sleep, and they told me he must die—how could they find tongues for such cruelty!—he so young!—that I must for ever after miss his clear blue eyes and his golden curls, that he shook so gaily when he laughed. He sank slowly; and when they told me he had not an hour to live, I raised him from the bed and held him in my arms. As I saw the little spirit struggling against the disease, the tears came into my eyes; and oh! what would I not have given to have changed places with him. To me these sufferings would but have been the entrance into bliss; but he had lost no friends, no dear ones—he was not leaving the few to meet with the many (as I should have done). The tears came gushing from my eyes, and fell upon his fevered forehead. He died there, in my arms, for I saw his eyes grow dull, and I bent over him and imprinted my last kisses on his lips. And while I kissed him, I felt his lips grow cold.

How little did I think, when those children played around me, that but few years would pass away ere they would be sleeping in the grave. Frank, the eldest, was sent to a relation in India. There was a dark night and a storm, and the vessel that had left England with such glee and beauty, was never heard of more. Harry, the second boy, died of the same fever as my bright-haired Charlie ; but Fanny grew up to be a blessing to her mother, and it was but two years ago that she married one who had loved her long and truly. They are happy, very happy, and every night, as I kneel down alone by my bedside, I pray to my Father in Heaven, so far as it is His good will, to grant them long life, and longer happiness than mine ; and I pray Him to forgive if I feel impatient, for man is but frail ; nor am I strong enough in spirit to look back on the past without a feeling of regret.

I remember the story of Fanny's "wooning, and winning, and wedding." She was young, and so was he, but they have worked their way on in life together well. He was a young physician, and had but few friends among the rich, while among the poor he was very much beloved, for he was at the side of all who were sick, cheering them often with money, when heaven knows he could little spare it ;

and oftener with kind words—for one kind word well-spoken outweighs the heaviest purse. I did my best for him; my help was but little, yet it proved well for him in the end.

He had loved Fanny for a long, long time. She was some three years younger than he, but she loved him truly. He had attended an old lady—one of my parishioners—whose story was enveloped in mystery, but whom I had known from my boyhood.

She heard from the *good* people of the village about the attachment of the young doctor for Fanny.

“They wondered,” they said, “that a young man like Mr. Calrow should aspire to the hand of Fanny Forster; and she was but a silly girl to listen to him, when there was Sir Somebody, and the Honourable Something Else, who positively worshipped her.”

The old lady listened to this without any remark; but after her death, when her will was read, it was found she had left the young doctor a comfortable little competency.

Her's was a strange story. She had been beautiful and accomplished, the only child of noble parents; but they were proud, and she was proud,

and she loved a poor man ; she would have her way, and with a father's curse, who had never blessed her, she fled forth on the wide world. But he, for whom she had given up all, forsook her in her need. She was too proud to yield, and, with a strong will, she had earned her daily bread until the old earl died ; and then—even then—she stayed in this quiet little village, to atone for her past faults and pride.

It was with part of her riches that the young man took home his bride. There were some who wondered that she did not leave more to the young couple—*but she was wisest.*

I am wandering from the remembrances of that Christmas night, when those children played around me, when a strange step was on the stair, and when, after long, long years, I met my friend, Henry Vivian. But, oh ! how changed from my old college acquaintance. So careworn and thin—that once high, noble forehead, prematurely marked with the furrows of the tides of life. There was a strange, stony glare in his once handsome eyes, yet there was a holiness about his grief and despairing wretchedness, that forbad me to question him. But the children's hearts yearned towards him—as they always do, Heaven bless them for it—towards the unhappy. They crept up to him—

they spoke to him half shyly—they peered up into his face, and at length my little Charlie climbed up upon his knee, and tried to smooth the wrinkles on his brow. A tear glistened in Vivian's eyes, as he bent down and kissed the child. They soon became good friends, and the little ones asked him to sing to them. He hesitated for some time, but at length broke into a wild, unnatural melody. It was like the music the winds play upon *her* harp in that little cottage; yet it had a harsher tone, and sounded more like the night breezes that moan through the ruins of the old castle on the hill. The words I shall never forget!—

“Give me—give me ruby wine
From the oldest of the kegs!
What care can it be of mine,
If 'tis bitter at the dregs?
Shall I hesitate and think,
Wasting many a festive hour?
Shall I pause before I drink,
Until all the wine be sour?”

“Roses for my brow entwine;
Give me Pleasure's blooming wreath!
What care can it be of mine,
If the thorns be hid beneath?”



Shall I wait, before my head
That sweet-scented crown adorns ;
Till the blossoms all are dead,
Nought remaining save the thorns ?

“Sing me some wild song of thine—
Sing it to thy harp of gold !
What care can it be of mine,
If or harp or voice grow old ?
Shall I wait, still lingering,
Till the voice has sung its last ;
And the harp has but one string
Tuned to echoes of the past ?”

#

When he finished, the children gazed wonderingly at him.

“He saw,” he said, “they could not understand it, and he prayed they never might—it was hardly meant for children—it was a song it cost him much to learn ; but he knew no other.”

He buried his face in his hands for some minutes, and the dancing flames of the yule-log shone on the track of a tear down his cheek, when he raised his head again, and said, “He would tell them a story—it was from a book of German legends, and he thought they would like it better than the song.” The tale ran as follows :

THE MOTH AND THE CANDLE.

There he stood, though all the guests had departed !

The candles burned brightly, and the plates and dishes, and silver ornaments on the table, smiled to see him there. And the trifle said to the tipsy cake—

“What can he be idling away his time in that way for?”

The tipsy cake said—

“I’b sure I dunno—brabs esdrunk.”

And the champagne bottles held themselves very upright, and the decanters said never a word, for they had stoppers in their mouths. But the ices said—

“It’s very cool of him to stand like that when we are all waiting for him to go.” For they intended to have a *soirée* when everybody had left.

But the young man did not hear them. He was thinking of the cruelty of her he loved. Long had he worshipped her at a distance, for she was rich and noble. while he was but a poor poet who wrote

in her praise ; and sometimes she had deigned to smile kindly and speak sweetly to him. That night he had met her—he had told her his love, and had met with scorn and slighting.

There he stood, watching the door through which she had gone. He heard not the voices of the last departing guests.

Presently he turned his eyes to the tall candle that stood proudly in the centre of the table. Oh ! that candle was proud ; it had a gold fringe, and it stood in a silver candlestick, and it said, “ *I am not tallow, not grease, not a part of over-fed animals.*” No ; not even a composition-candle—not of a mixed, degenerate race. *I am a flower !*”

It forgot that since it had formed part of a flower, the bees had changed its nature, and men had altered its appearance. So it stood up and thought it was a rose ; and the prouder it grew, the faster it burnt.

But while the poet was watching it, a little plain brown moth came flying out of the conservatory which opened into the room, and circled about the table.

It stopped to admire a silver spoon, but the candle was jealous—“What ! shall that insignifi-

cant little brown thing admire that spoon more than me ?”

So it burnt brighter.

The little moth flew towards it; it circled about it, and fanned the flame with its wings.

The candle said never a word, but it burnt brighter still. And the little moth flew into the flame.

“I never gave you any encouragement,” said the candle, as the little moth fell scorched and dying on the table.

“Such is my fate !” murmured the young man, as he rushed from the room. But the plates, and forks, and glasses did not laugh now. There was no festivity in the supper-room among them that night.

And the candle burnt down into its socket.

The next Christmas I got the book he mentioned as a present for Fanny, but the story was not there; and when, some time afterwards, I heard his history, I almost fancied the tale was his own. He had risen in fame as a poet—he had gained patronage—he had gone to rich men’s

houses, and sat at rich men's tables. There he saw a woman, lovely as the famed sculptures of the ancients, but like them, alas! cold and heartless. He wrote in her praise, and her beauty became the theme of general admiration. He met her one night at a ball at Lord E——'s. The next morning he was missing at his college, and was never heard of again. I did not know this, however, on that Christmas evening when he told this tale. And when it was done he rose hastily and departed, in spite of all my entreaties that he would stay.

From that time I have never heard from him; but I have read of a battle in India, where column after column reeled back from a breach that vomited forth death on thousands, until an ensign, at the head of a company, rushed up through the rain of bullets, and planted the British flag on the ramparts. His example encouraged the troops, and the town was taken. The gallant young soldier was found dead, but still standing, clinging to the staff of the flag he had planted so bravely. His body had formed a target for the enemy's marksmen. When they tried to remove him, they found the staff could not be released from his

death-grasp without force. So they buried him with "the banner he had borne so well." And, without the walls of that city, a tall tamarind sheds its fruit over the grave of Ensign Vernon.

CHAPTER IV.

“I had a dove, and the sweet dove died?

* * * *

Sweet little red-feet, why should you die?

Why would you leave me, sweet bird, why?”

KEATS.

“Soiled and dull thou art;

Yellow are thy time-worn pages

As the russet, rain-molested

Leaves of Autumn.

* * * *

Recalling by their voices

Youth and travel.”

LONGFELLOW.

THIS morning it was bitter cold, and the snow that had fallen in the night lay frozen, so that it crisped and crackled beneath my feet; and the

trees had clothed themselves in white, as the primitive Christians were wont to do at this sacred season. But a feeling of sadness was at my heart—the echo of an unknown fear was ringing in my ears. I went along the well-known path that leads to that deserted home. The morning sun had just begun to melt the snow on the tops of the trees; and as I entered the gate, the fir upon the lawn wept over me, as a great thrush sprang out of it, and darted far away over the white meadows.

“O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear.”

There was a prophetic sadness in the tear-like drops that hung upon the green porch. But within that porch, on the threshold of the house that had sheltered it, *it lay*—the reality of the foreshadowed grief—the dove—cold, stiff, and dead; and the frozen dews of night had enclosed the frail little form in a crystal casket. I raised it from the chill ground and folded it to my heart; but there has not been warmth enough there to restore it to life, for a long, long time.

I dug a grave for it at the foot of the white jasmine, and it shall shed its perfume round it in the summer, and shake down its sere leaves over

it in the autumn—and the winter shall drop tears of rain—and night-dews shall mourn for it—and in my heart it shall be enshrined with the memory of my Darling—until my heart is at rest—and for ever.

The breeze is quiet out of doors, and the moaning of the old owl in the ivy-grown belfry only makes the silence seem more deep; and the bats go flitting by the windows in the dim light, like half-forgotten memories of days long past. I have brought out the old portfolio with its discoloured papers and faded writing—here a pen-and-ink sketch, and there a defaced pencil-drawing; and here are some lines to Frank's Mary. I recollect them well. It was her birth-day, and he was going to give her a little bunch of forget-me-nots; he had written the verses and read them to me. I tried to persuade him to give them with the flowers; so he wrote them out on a delicate little sheet of note-paper, that my darling gave him; but he would not let her copy them for him though his hand shook like an aspen leaf. Poor Frank! he rode into town, but when he got to Mary's home his heart failed him. I heard the whole story afterwards.

He rode up to the gate and found Mary stand-

ing there—of course not expecting or looking out for *him*, so she gave a pretty little start when she did see him ; he presented the flowers and let the verses fall at her feet as if by accident—and she, “half-sly, half-shy,” picked up the little note, and asked him demurely if he had dropped it, and he blushed, trembled, and said, “yes.” She gave them to him, and so ended poor Frank’s love mission.

They may not sound well to the ears of others, but they were only meant for Mary—

I.

“Sweet is the little flow’ret blue,
Of lovers’ thoughts the sign,
• Beneath the grass, and peeping through
In love and hope to the evening dew—
So beamed thine eyes, so soft, so true,
So trustingly on mine.

II.

“Sweetly they shone—oh ! may they shine
Many and happy years ;
These lips, that praise no form but thine,
With earnest love their prayers combine,
That she, whose life is half of mine,
May shed no bitter tears.”

True words, though simple, for his love was true.

This paper raises memories around me—the sound of bells and music—the whirl of the dance—and merry faces—and soft, soft touches. Oh ! no ; fade not yet sweet visions of the past ! It was long ago—when the old church clock seemed to have stopped for ever, dreading to strike the hour twelve, that was to add another year to the world. It was the approaching birth-day of one year, while we yet hung over the death-bed of the last. And in those few minutes, which our expectation lengthened into hours, I wrote these lines—

“ Ring—ye happy bells,
Ring your last farewells
To the dying year.
He hath brought us grief ;
Ye bring us relief,
For his end is near.

“ Yet ring sadly too,
For some tears are due
To the dying year,
Though mixed with annoy,
He hath brought us joy,
And his end is near.

“ Mingled smiles and sighs—
Blessed memories

Of the dying year !
 Who can tell if this
 Next bring pain or bliss ?
 Oh, the end is near !

“Thus for the last time
 In this simple rhyme—
 Dying—dying year,
 I address thee. Bells !
 Ring your last farewells,
 Ring them loud and clear !

“Hark ! ’tis their first knell ;
 Hush ! ’tis their farewell
 To the dying year.
 One from earth hath gone—
 This another one !
And the end is here !”

“Who can tell if this next bring pain or bliss ?”
 Oh woe—it brought to me unutterable woe ! It
 was *the year*. The very thought brings that sharp,
 cold pang to my heart, and the roar of the sea to
 my ears ; and to-night is the last night of this
 year, and to-morrow will be the first of another.
 Here is poor Frank’s last poem—unfinished. I
 remember that I found this among his papers after
 his death. It was written in Italy—in Venice.

Here it is, with its alterations and corrections, and in the margin a little sketch of a beautiful face, evidently drawn when he was thinking. It is a very personification of Bianca, and yet there is a likeness to Mary in it, too. At the bottom, there is a little gondola—and here is one of the “watery pathways.” Ah, I have often wondered over that unfinished poem, like a gleam of light that, as we whirl along some dark road, gives us a glimpse of the landscape, and leaves us to fill up the blank from imagination. I remember such a gleam. It was as I returned from seeing Frank off to Italy. I was travelling along swiftly, when we passed a forge, and the glowing fire inside lit up all within its reach, and showed a little mill-stream that turned a large slow-moving wheel, poised between two ivy-grown piers; and the background was a thick fir plantation growing up a rocky slope, but beyond that I could see nothing. On the one side towered up the lofty firs, and on the other the outlines of cottages and trees, showing faintly against the dark sky. I went home and forgot it for years, until I saw a little sketch of a water-mill that Frank had drawn in Mary’s album; and that little glimpse of bright light came back to me. I went to that place, and

saw the mill-wheel and the forge, the pretty little village, and the old grey church. There was a patriarchal elm on the green before the yew-shaded manor-house, and there was a school, whence I heard the busy hum of voices wafted from the open windows ; and the shop, overgrown with white roses — and the brook, that turned the mill and wandered, murmuring, through the village. Thus I returned and saw that place, but the tale must rest unfinished for ever and ever.

“There were two sisters in the ancient town,
That reigns upon a hundred sea-girt isles ;
The one, with locks of sunny auburn-brown,
And lips for ever budding into smiles,
And rosy cheeks, and skin as ivory white.
She was perfection—save that she was blind !
In her blue eye there dwelt no sunny light,
But a vague look, all cold and undefined.
Her sister was her senior—taller she—
And darker—colder, but no less admired ;
For she had eyes, though proud, yet fair to see
As ever eyes, that hopeless love inspired.
The people, when they named them, used to say,
‘The Mild Bianca’—‘Isabel the Proud ;’
And they were counted fairest (by the gay
Nobles of Venice) of the floating crowd

Of gondola-borne beauties, that all day
Flowed down the watery pathways with the tide
In that old city of extended sway,
'Queen of the Isles' and the old Ocean's bride."


For long after I read this, I sat musing and guessing how the tale would finish—how to fill up the landscape, of which life lighted up a portion, while death darkened the remainder.

Would those two sisters have loved the same young noble? and would the proud Isabel have spoken false words to her sister, and would she have believed them, and left him to wed Isabel, or would she have still loved on; and would it have ended like the ballad that our dear mother used to sing over our little bed—the song, with its sad, strange burden of "Binnorie, oh! Binnorie!" Or would some villain of the "gay nobles of Venice" have tried to deceive the trusting Bianca; and would Isabel's sisterly love have burst forth in one angry blow, that laid the deceiver at her feet; or would the Prince of some rich land have wooed Isabel, and would she, in her love for her poor, helpless sister

have refused him; and then would he have promised to take Bianca, too, to dwell with her sister—and then would he have fallen in love with Bianca, and would they have fled from Isabel—and would she have pursued them—and then the gleam of a dagger—a stab—and a sister's blood on the blade? But Bianca might have refused to leave Venice, or, if she had, she might not have listened to the wicked Prince—and yet he might not have been a wicked Prince—and there might have been no Prince at all.

It is vain to think of it, for one supposition brings another, and we wander away from the beginning; and the fruitful brain that could have imagined and executed it, has long since turned to dust within its mouldering casket.

It is long since I have written any poetry, but the sight of these old papers has awakened my old failing; and I will try. Alas! the last time I wrote, *she* was sitting by me, and our eyes were filled with tears. It was the epitaph of our dear little one, who was, indeed, "a link to draw us to Heaven." She has already gone thither, and I, too, shall soon



follow her. And then we shall meet to part no more !



CONCLUSION.

BY FANNY CALROW.

“There is no death!—what seems so is transition;
 This life of mortal breath
 Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
 Whose portal we call death.”

LONGFELLOW.



O part no more”—they *have*
 met now to part no more.

Yesterday morning my dear,
 kind uncle (we always used to
 call him so—that is, my bro-
 thers and I; but he has been a
 father to my husband and me) was found seated in
 his arm-chair, apparently asleep. At his feet lay
 Luath, his head resting in my uncle’s left hand
 —the poor dog, though blind, seemed to know
 that he was dead.

They say it is terrible to look on death, but not upon such death as this; and I tried to check the foolish, selfish tears, that gathered in my eyes, when I remembered that death was to him a happiness beyond what words can tell. He was smiling calmly, as I have often seen him while he slept in the very same chair; and, when he awoke, he used to say that his life was happiest in his dreams. But he is not dreaming now.

A few verses were on the table before him. He had just written his name at the bottom of the paper and before the date, when he fell asleep—fell asleep? No; when he awoke from the dreams of Earth to share the reality of Heaven with her he loved so well.

THE TWINS.

Young Life and Love, with arms entwined,
Together wandered through the world.
Love died, alas! and was consigned
To Earth's embrace, with pinions furled.

And Life passed weeping on her way
Deprived of her twin brother, Love.
Oh, slowly—slowly, day by day,
Did her sad footsteps onward rove.

At length the weary journey ends—
She nears the Heavens' golden portal,
Beyond whose glorious valves extends
The Paradise of Life Immortal.

As on their hinges back they move,
She sees her long-lamented brother!
Once Earthly Love—now Heavenly Love,
The same—and yet another.

EVERARD SHIRLEY,

1ST JAN., 1—.

“The rest is silence.”

UNE PENSEE.

“And there is pansies, that's for thoughts.”

OPHELIA: HAMLET, ACT IV., S. 5.

LAY lilies on the virgin breast
Of her who dieth young;
And o'er the warrior gone to rest
Let laurel wreaths be flung;

But strew ye purple pansies, when the old man's knell is rung!

Fair types those lily flowers are
Of her, for whom ye weep;
Whom earnest prayer and loving care
Could not among us keep;

But strew ye purple pansies, when the old man falls asleep!

Well-fitting for the warrior dead
The laurels he has won—
Proof of the brave life he has led,
The dangers he has run;

But strew ye purple pansies, when the old man's war is done!

By all the glances backward cast
Along Life's weary shore—
By all the memories of the Past,
That may return no more—

Oh, strew ye purple pansies, when the old man's life is o'er!

HEROES WITHOUT LAUREL.

THEY fell not in the murderous battle,
Where cannon's roar and musket's rattle—
Where rolling drum and trumpet-tone
May haply drown the dying groan ;
Where the wild joy that fills the heart
Can more than human strength impart ;
Where fiercely meeting, steel to steel,
Man cannot fear—or scarcely feel—
Or—if a thought of Death should pass,
Swift as the breath across a glass—
He knows to die in battle strife
Is nobler than an aimless life,
And, wounded—weary—breathless—gory,
Sinks dying in the arms of Glory,
The smile of triumph on his face,
As one victorious in the race,
By the long toil o'ercome—opprest,
Falls gladly on some friendly breast.

So dies, amid the din of fight,
The warrior striving for the Right—
His eyes—ere they begin to glaze—
Can see the coming wreath of bays!

But, oh, not thus on battle plain
The heroes, whom I sing, were slain :
Not theirs the charge in wild career—
Small time for thought—and none for fear—
So madly—wildly onward dashing
With ringing cheer and sabre clashing,
Where, even if Death should be their doom,
The Sun of Glory gilds their tomb!

Not thus they fell—not thus they fought—
And Glory not the meed they sought!
Theirs was the struggle, where Renown
Gives not to Victory a crown :—
Wherein to fall, and conquer not,
Is but to die, and be forgot!

Where on the narrow beds are laid
The ghastly relics War has made ;
Or where above the crowded camp—
Like vapours o'er a stagnant swamp—
Hovers Disease on vulture pinion,
And pallid Sickness holds dominion ;
There—or on verge of battle plain,
The Watchers by the bed of Pain—

The kindly Soothers of Distress—
The Surgeons—Heroes Laurelless—
Strive long and earnestly to save,
And of its victim rob the grave!

Yet not to them is given the praise,
That the bold warrior's toil repays!
Denied to those the wreath of laurel,
Who die not in a nation's quarrel!
But when our God, in brighter skies,
Shall wipe the tear-drops from all eyes—
When War her blood-stained flag has furled—
Who knoweth—in that Better World—
Whether the wreath of laurel green
Shall on the warrior's brow be seen?

But surely round their brows, who fell
Uncrowned on Earth—though fighting well—
Shall twine bright wreaths of Asphodel!



THE YEAR THAT DIES.

Close his eyes—they look so cold
Out across the snowy wold :
Draw the curtains close around,
That the bells with joyous sound
His dull hearing may not wound.

Clasp his hands—so long and thin ;
They were full (when he came in
Just twelve months ago) with grain—
Seed of happiness and pain,
That he scattered round like rain !

Hush !—he's gone—adown the wind
Died that last vague undefined
Word "Farewell"—'twas more a sigh
Than a word ; I heard it die
On the breeze, that moaneth by.

Smooth the wrinkles on his brow—
He'll not feel the pressure now.
Haak ! the Rain sobs at the door,
Thinking how it saw of yore
Old Years die—and shall see more !

Lay him out ere he grow cold,
Clothe him for the churchyard mould.—
Who is this among us here,
Standing by the old man's bier ?—
'Tis his heir—'tis the New Year !

Hail to thee ! thou last of Years,
With thy young eyes wet with tears ;
But the woe of youth is brief,
Thou wilt soon forget thy grief ;
Thy new power will bring relief !

Leave us—grey old men, New Year !
To the earth his corpse to bear.
Go ! the world with mirth and glee,
Waits impatiently for thee.
Leave the dead, so cold and grim !
Some day thou shalt be like him !

THE DEATH WATCH.



HAD just finished the annotations to the Second Edition of my great quarto, "De Planetis aliisque Miraculis Cœli." My lamp was slowly expiring, and the night was profoundly silent, save the low lapping of the canal against the basement of the house. Suddenly I heard the regular but muffled plash of oars. No need was there of a moment's thought to guess the dark, stern rowers in that black gondola that stole silently along the waters. They were my enemies—the emissaries of the Inquisition. I thought my retreat so well concealed, that I did not for a moment fear them, but sighed involuntarily as I pictured to myself

some loved one torn, in the dead silence of the night, from his home—some man, perhaps, guiltless of any crime save that of being great and envied.

I smiled to myself as I closed the quarto (the book that was the cause, but, at the same time, the consolation of my persecution), to think how little they guessed I was near them. Three times had I fled from the Familiars, rescuing each time my precious manuscript——

The sound of the oars ceased. Merciful Heaven! I heard their slow tramp, tramp—tramp, tramp, ascending the staircase. The house was lofty, the flight of stairs long; there was yet, perhaps, time! I wrapped the precious volume in my scarf, and bound it to my breast. I rushed to the window; it was too high for a leap, and I could see in the canal the long, inky shadows of two of the Familiars standing on the water-steps. And still I heard their ceaseless tramp, tramp—tramp, tramp, keeping time to the beating of my heart.

Like a hunted hare, I coursed round and round the room, hopeless, despairing, half-mad; and still nearer and nearer sounded the hollow tramp, tramp—tramp, tramp, until I screamed to drown the horrid sound. When the Familiars reached the

door, I had swooned; they raised me, and bore me down, but through all my deathlike swoon I could hear the tramp, tramp—tramp, tramp of those dark forms, as they carried me adown the winding, echoing stair. They entered the boat, and placed me in the bottom, and then followed the measured fall of the oars. Soon I revived, and became aware that I was blindfolded and gagged, but I was distinctly certain, from the strange, moist, cold, still atmosphere, that we were passing along one of those vaulted water-passages that lead beneath the prisons of the Great Tribunal. I seemed to see, through the handkerchief that bound my eyes, ghastly, pallid faces gazing up overywhere through the sluggish waters—the faces of those who were cast forth by night from the dark, dreary prison vaults above.

And still I heard the measured plash of the oars.

Presently we stopped, and again came that hollow tramp, tramp—tramp, tramp, up the echoing stone steps.

They led me into the Judgment Hall, and unbound my eyes, and removed the gag. It was a gloomy but lofty hall—so lofty that the eye vainly attempted to pierce its height amid the imperfect

light. At the end of the hall sat the judges, their heads covered with hoods, from the apertures in which I seemed to see their fiery, malignant eyes burning into my very heart. And amid that solemn silence, I could hear no sound save a perpetual drop, drop—drop, drop, an ominous sound, like the fall of blood upon a marble pavement; and such it was but too truly, for, looking in the direction whence the sound came, I saw on the right of the chief judge a bronze lion's head, with eyes of carbuncle, and ivory teeth, from between which every instant there fell into a brazen tray, resting on a tripod beneath, little folded papers, with ever and anon a red seal, looking like a drop of blood. Drop, drop—drop, drop. And my heart told me that these were the secret informations that were cast into the great Lion's Heads in the City, and by some unknown means conveyed thence into that brazen tripod. Too truly, each scrap of paper was blood. Drop, drop—drop drop! I had never known before the immense—the almost superhuman knowledge and power of the Great Tribunal, nor wondered I now that they had discovered the place of my concealment, when they had so many spies in the city.

My trial was carried on silently. It hardly lasted a minute. The Familiar on my left, as if instinctively, unbound my scarf, took the treasured book from off my bosom, and bore it to the judges, who opened it, passed it from one to the other, gazing into it with their fiery eyes until I fancied I could see the parchment shrivel and smoke beneath their burning glances.

And still those sealed papers kept their solemn drop, drop—drop, drop, into the brazen tripod.

At length, at a sign from the judge, the Familiars again seized me; they allowed me no time—no opportunity of defence. They had the book, taken from my person, with the ink scarcely dry, and that book, militating as it did against the established opinions of the Holy Inquisition, was sufficient proof. I must die, and die by torture.

I was borne off, and chained to the floor of a small cell, shaped like a chimney, and then the Familiars withdrew. As I lay wondering what horrible, excruciating death the demoniacal wisdom of the Inquisition had adjudged me, I heard a regular click, click—click, click, while, at the same moment, the red flame of a torch threw a

long stream of light across the cell, pointing like a blood-stained finger, and revealing the ingenious apparatus of death.

Directly over my head hung a huge iron weight, sufficient, had it fallen upon me, to have ground me to powder; this was suspended by a chain, which passed over a toothed wheel, from the catches of which, as it slowly revolved, the links were released with that sharp click, click—click, click, that had attracted my attention. They were going, then, to crush my head with this ponderous weight, slowly and surely pressing inch by inch. Powers of Heaven! what a fearful death!

As the weight slowly descended, with the deadly click, click—click, click, the stream of light descended with it, and I at length saw that the other end of the chain was bound to another smaller weight by a broad band of leather.

Immediately the plan was evident. This smaller weight was only just sufficient to keep the links down upon the teeth of the wheel, but when the greater weight had descended to a certain distance, the leather strap attached to the lesser one would encounter a sharp, bright, semi-circular blade, which projected from the supports of the wheel, the strap

would be instantly severed, the chain released, and the huge weight would descend upon the wretched prisoner beneath.

Click, click—click, click !

Slowly descended the weight—slowly revolved the wheel. Oh ! the agony of those moments !

At length I heard—actually heard (so acute had agony rendered every sense), the razor-like blade cut into the thick leather. One involuntary, convulsive swerve of my head—so violent that it dislocated my left arm, which was stretched out tightly and bound, to prevent my moving—and the weight descended. That instinctive motion had saved my life; but the corner of the ponderous mass had fallen on the fleshy part of my shoulder, cutting out a piece—as cleanly as if with a knife, and crushing it to the stone beneath.

I raised my head—horror ! my hair was glued to the ground by what my fancy too truly pictured to me as the clotted blood of former victims, whose death had been too surely accomplished.

Horror and pain had done their work, and I swooned.

When I returned to my senses, I found myself immersed up to the arm-pits in water. I tried to raise my arms—they were bound down to my

sides ; and I found that I was closely fastened to a post in the centre of a vault half-filled with water. Meanwhile, a sullen drip, drip—drip, drip, told me that from the roof above me was constantly distilling the cold element that had restored me.

I thought this had only been done to revive me, but I little knew the infernal ingenuity of the Inquisition ; it was only another kind of torture.

I could feel the line of the surface of the water against my skin as if a red-hot wire had been bound round me, and as I stood thinking, I felt it—literally felt it creeping higher and higher by hair's-breadths. On looking round me, by the dim light, I saw the whole surface of the water broken into rings by the falling drops—drip, drip—drip, drip. From the part of the roof immediately above me, no water fell, but I could see through the small circular aperture over my head the face of one of the Familiars peering down upon me. But he was only awaiting my revival, for as soon as he saw me move he withdrew, and left me alone with Death.

Presently the rats, driven from their retreats, began to swim about and climb up my shoulders ;

they were too frightened to hurt me, but still my flesh instinctively shuddered at their cold, wet feet. And still continued that sullen drip, drip—drip, drip, and still I could feel the surface of the water rising up to my neck, like the burning edge of a heated scimitar.

Hours passed in this suspense. The waters kissed my lips, washed into my mouth, and presently began to gurgle down my throat. My breath caught—I choked. Oh! the agony of that time! I suffered the most fearful torture, until at length, after a feeling, as if every blood-vessel in my head had burst, I fell into a sleep, amid the most delightful sensations, with strains of exquisite music ringing in my ears.

But the Inquisition was not yet satisfied. By the very refinement of cruelty, I was brought to life again. Of all the agony I suffered, this was by far the worst.

The tingling of the blood, like molten lead, coursing through my veins—the knife-like inspirations of breath—the tearing cough that seemed to rend my lungs—all this was unequalled by any mental or bodily pain I ever experienced.

To look upon those cowed, cloaked forms—to feel these torments, while above the red torches

flared and flickered with a hot smoky light, was enough to make a man, less weakened by pain than I was, fancy that he was opening his eyes in the regions of Everlasting Punishment.

When I had sufficiently recovered, I was again borne to the first cell, and there bound down again. This time the means of death were more sure. I was placed in a stone coffin, a grating was padlocked down over me, and I saw above me, gleaming in the half light of the cell like a meteor, the bright steel head of a lance pointed towards my heart.

The spear-shaft passed through two steel rings, fitting tightly around it.

And now, tap, tap—tap, tap, came loud and clear upon my ear, and I perceived a small iron mallet, worked by some unseen devilish machinery, falling on the end of the lance shaft. Tap, tap—tap, tap, slowly came that tapering steel flame down to my heart—the glittering tongue so soon to lap my heart's blood. Tap, tap—tap, tap, and it descends on my skin—another blow and it will pierce to my heart!

Suddenly, a light burst upon me—the grating was gone. I started up and found myself in the broad daylight of the 1st of April, 1855, sitting up in my bed, aching in every limb from cramp.

By my bedside lay the works of Edgar Allen Poe, while beneath my pillow lurked the diabolical originator of my misery—the huge silver turnip, denominated a watch, lent me by Harespring, the watch-maker, while he was repairing my own small still-voiced Geneva.

I seized the monster by the chain and flung it from one end of the room to the other; and never again did that huge conglomeration of creaking wheels, jerking chains, and wheezy springs, disturb with its “tramp, tramp, drop, drop, click, click, tick, tick,” the slumbers of a weary bank-clerk in the Nineteenth Century.

THE FORSAKEN.

I.

I HEARD beside a streamlet mute,
With trailing willows overgrown,
A lady singing to her lute,
And thus she made her moan—
“ Ah, welladay !” she sang alway.

II.

“ Spring not the blossoms of these bowers
From mould whereof our graves are made ?
But not from graves the lily flowers,
The happy angels braid !
“ Ah, welladay ! Ah, welladay !

III.

“ In every home the memory dwells
Of one within the churchyard green,

But in the fields of asphodels
Stern Death hath never been !
Ah, welladay ! Ah, welladay !

IV.

“Oh ! changing, changing with an hour,
True Love is here an empty name !
In those bright fields the simplest flower
Remains for aye the same !
Ah, welladay ! Ah, welladay !

V.

“Oh ! changing—ranging—cruel Love !
Forsaken heart ! and aching breast !
Had I the white wings of a dove,
Soon would I fly to Rest !
Ah ! welladay !” she sang away.

THE WHISPERED CONSOLATION.

“Οὐκ ἀπίθανεν, ἀλλὰ καθεύδει.”

Nor long to us was given
The child our mother bore ;
He is gone to Rest in Heaven—
He is dead—he is no more,
Our loved one's life is o'er !

And we murmured, broken-hearted,
In lamentation sore ;
“Our brother hath departed—
He is dead—he is no more,
Our loved one's life is o'er !”

Then we heard, amid our weeping,
A voice cry, “Weep no more !
He is not dead, but sleeping—
Not lost, but gone before—
Gone to a better shore !”

So we whispered to each other,
As his corpse to earth we bore—
“He is not dead—our brother—
Not lost, but gone before—
Gone to a better shore !”

THE PILOT AND THE STAR.

I SAW a pilot seated at the helm
Of a small shallop, that unceasing toiled
Against the tide. Within the Heavens there shone
A single star, to which the mariner
Did steer his course. Its glittering rays o'erlaid
His watery path with silver: by its beams
He saw to guide his vessel, and the star
Spangled his robe with light, and on his head
It threw a glory; so he seemed as one
Who by his inborn greatness overtowers
The sons of men. And yet it was not so—
The light was of the star, and not of him,
For had the star withdrawn its radiance,
He had but been a guideless wanderer
In utter darkness o'er a pathless sea.

I am that pilot o'er that pathless sea—
The ocean—Life—and Thou the guiding-star,
Without whose love I should be cast adrift
In a frail, rudderless, and sinking boat,
Sport for the tides of Life.

SONNET.

“And he stayed yet other seven days ; and sent forth the dove ; which returned not again unto him any more.”—GEN. VIII. 12.

ARISE, oh, Heart, for at the lattice—hark !
Love humbly for a refuge doth entreat ;
Let it not vainly in the midnight dark,
Against the pane its wearied pinions beat ;—
Ah, wondrous, patient Love ! so strong in hope !
Arise, oh, Heart, and fling the casement wide,—
Delay not longer, lest, before you ope,
It should despair—being so long denied !
Twice did the Patriarch send the gentle dove
To wander o'er the waters vast and dark ;
And twice—upborne upon the wings of love—
The bird of Constancy regained the ark ;
But the third time he watched for her in vain ;
So Love, too oft repulsed, returneth not again !

THE BOYS OF ENGLAND.

“ENGLAND can now send to her army in the East only boys of eighteen, and these are useless unless drilled.” So spoke, during the late war, in the House, the Honourable Member for Someborough.

After such a decided assertion as this, it would require a little courage for any one to call himself “one of the boys of England.” And yet it seems hard that we are, all of a sudden, obliged to become ashamed of that which was once our pride and our glory.

Let us see what the boys of England are capable of—let us pass side by side with them up to the time when they cease to be boys—cease even to be

boys of eighteen, as the honourable gentleman was pleased to call them.

Who so boldly as the boys of England, in playground or in school, stand up for their rights (real or imaginary)—barring-out a tyrannical master—or thrashing “the tall bully who lifts his head,” and then “lies” on the ground, struck down by the blow of one of the boys of England?

Who but the boys of England, brought up in her broad fields and woods, hold the village green against all comers? Who but the boys of England, growing older, swell her ranks by enlisting or vieing for commissions, are entrusted, first of all, with the dangerously conspicuous ensigncy—the position of peril and death?

Mingled with her men, the boys of England faced down the burly Chartist navy in the “glorious days of the Specials.”

It is the boys of England who, face to face, and foot to foot, drive before them the sturdy, undergraduate-hating bargee. It is the boys of England who tear their boat through the water as swiftly as the long-trained waterman—nay, more quickly, for did not the Oxford crew beat the Watermen, in 1854, at Putney?

It is the boys of England who, following the

rattling hounds, shrink from no danger, clearing fences that older hands tremble at.

It is the boys of England who do this—yet, strange to say, the boys of England are useless !

Yes—they may be bold, and strong, and of deathless “pluck ;” but, alas ! unhappily they are not drilled.

They may keep in order the Chartist navy, but they cannot keep step in the double-quick.

They may drive the barges from the streets, but they cannot stand in a line, with their chins at the same elevation, and their noses in the same plane.

They may face a desperate “rasper,” or put on a furious “spurt,” but they cannot hold their muskets at an exact right-angle to the earth’s surface, or keep their fore-fingers on the red seam of their regulation trowsers.

And what comes of this ? Why, as our friend the Honourable Member observes, England must buy. Yes, England (as foolish children have spent their money in the Arcades last Christmas) is obliged to buy a box of leaden German soldiers—unflinching men—cast in the same mould—of the same

mettle (or metal, which you please, for the description of England's purchase is equally applicable to that of the little boys we have just mentioned). Proud should Germany be to think that the Homers of the Crimea shall sing, in future times, of the Northern Heroes, with locks of tow, "to whom the eyes were as those of a cod, which the polymochthous fisher having caught, either off the hoarse shores of Newfoundland, or around the ice-bound islands of Loffoden, he, taking, boils in a hollow chalcopleurous vessel." They shall sing—like Horace—the "gravem Pelidæ stomachum"—the "fair round stomach" of a German Achilles, [^]to whom the dust of the conflict and the smoke of tobacco were as the breath of his nostrils."

These heroes are drilled—yes, drilled as sure as they live! Oh! happy thought of German government, that makes every man necessarily a soldier for a certain period of his life, in order that, if a revolution breaks out, he may be able to go through his military exercises with regularity, and, at the word of command, plunge his bayonet into the bowels of his convulsed country.

Oh, yes! the Germans are well drilled—they will stand so correctly in line that all those bushy, sandy mustachios shall look like one, and those

unmistakeably German button-noses shall melt into one dense snub ; that those strange, baggy legs shall dwindle into one—although (alas for the fattening, oily, German cookery—alas for the beer, the sleep, and the tobacco !) train, drill, exercise them as you will, the swelling contours of the German squat, round corporations will ever protrude irregularly in the “best dressed” line (I speak militarily) composed of German troops.

Know this : the profile of the German corporation varies far more than that of the German countenance.

But, they are drilled ! and so, by the advice of the Honourable Member for Someborough, and others like him, England endeavours to buy a legion of mercenaries to fight her battles, and assist, with purchased courage, the fathers and brothers of the boys who stay in England—useless, because undrilled !

Would it not have been better to enroll the Poles and Hungarians into a legion, whose only pay—and they would need no other—should be the freedom of their native lands ?

The French—the “fierce, impetuous French,” as a gallant old grey-haired Admiral has called them—*they* are not drilled thus—they do not march in

an undeviating line, with their heads turning neither right nor left, but perseveringly following their noses. The French do not carry their muskets at an exact mathematical right-angle, silent as statues.

The French are not so bedrilled ; but then, you know, the boys of England are different—they must be drilled !

“The boys of England ! God bless them !” say I.

And for you, Honourable Member for Someborough, when, with showy sophistry, and perverted eloquence, you gave utterance in the House to that sweeping sentence, “that England can now send to her army in the East only boys of eighteen, and that these are useless, unless drilled,” did you think, when you spoke thus, how cruelly and inhumanly you insulted the many bleeding hearts and desolate hearths of England ?

But now lay aside folly and laughter, and read on until the end silently—with a tender and pitying heart—with gentle droppings of tears, if you will. Read reverently—reverently as you would step among the swelling green mounds in a country churchyard, unmarked by stone or inscription. Read reverently : these words may be the only

epitaph of many a noble boy of England at rest in a foreign land, with the trodden, cut-up grass of the battle-field just beginning to spring again over him.

Read reverently !

Oh ! Alma, Balaclava, Inkerman ! stirring names like war-trumpets—mournful words to many, as the slow funeral march ! You—you shall witness that the battles ye beheld were not unshared by the noble boys of England !

Statistical reader of the returns of “ killed and wounded,” you shall bear us out—by the aid of those silent messengers of woe—that of those who fell at Alma, half were boys of eighteen and twenty—boys who fell bravely and nobly in their first battle, side by side with the hardy veteran.

Read reverently !

Last of all—high witnesses before Heaven—come ye, mothers of England—childless mothers—sisters desolate—and others, even dearer ones, left alone and broken-hearted—shall not your tears, your wailings—and your silence more bitter than either, tell of the hearts that feel an aching void once filled by the warm, honest love of one of the boys of England ?

Fear not, weeping women ; they shall not belie

and insult your silent loved ones. England—their mother—shall remember them with tears of pride.

Fear not, weeping mothers! Nay, more! Shall I tell you of One Who, at the gates of Nain, had compassion, and said to the childless widow, “Weep not?”

THE BROOK WITHOUT A NAME.

“What’s in a name?”

SHAKESPEARE.

“A good deal !”

COMMON SENSE.

I MET her by a little burn,
That tinkled musically,
With many a fall, and many a turn,
Adown a bosky valley.

So fair—so fairy-like was she—
So lovely altogether ;
I could not choose but bend my knee
Before her on the heather.

She said she came to fetch the kine,
But—(nay—I will not doubt her,
And so I’ll own the fault was mine)—
The kine went home without her !

I said I tramped o'er gorse and furze
For grouse, that love the heather,
But—(here, I own, the fault was hers)
I did not bag a feather!

So through our chat (if you prefer,
I'll even say—our courting),
The lowing kine went without *her*—
I went without my sporting.

The sun was drinking from the plain
The dew, when first we mated;—
But it had all come back again
Before we separated!

How oft we kissed, I cannot count!
Of raptures so ecstatic,
The man who gives the true amount
Is basely mathematic.

In truth, she was the sweetest lass
I ever met in Scotland!
And, if there's one can her surpass,
I want to know "in what land?"

All day we passed in converse sweet,
Forgetting grouse and cattle;—
All day the burnie at our feet
Kept up its silvery prattle.

Best of all merry brooks that flow!
A very smile of Nature!

I'd make thee famous, did I know
Thy proper nomenclature.

Knew I the name thy waters took,
Amid those mountain ranges,
My song should make thee, little brook,
As mighty as the Ganges !

Yet—though my brook no title claims,
No hackneyed place in story,
Nor classes with the lesser names
Of Tiber—Thames—Missouri—

I will not let the world forget,
This noble title giving ;—
“The Bonny Burnie, where I met
The Sweetest Lassie living !”

TIME.

OH, silent Time—thou stately bark,
That, floating down the stream of years,
Art wafted by the breath of sighs,
And borne upon the tide of tears.
Oh, stay awhile upon the waves,
That calmly sleep in sunny rays,
The light that blushes on them now
Shall ne'er be seen in after days !
Alas, between these happy shores,
The widening river hurries still ;
I would I were where first it rose
A little, careless, prattling rill.
A little, careless, prattling rill,
Thou never, Stream, shalt be again,
Fated to hurry ever on
To the eternal, troubled main.—
Yet flow still onward to thy leap
Adown the foaming cataract !—
Man was not born to dream and sleep—
His life to suffer and to act !

JAMIE CLAVERSLIE.

I.

O, UP and spake sweet May's mithèr,
And turned her to her spouse—
“Ye'se gar them bree the strangest ale,
Ye'se gar them deck the house,
And ye maun don your brawest claes.”
The mithèr sae spake she;
—But May she's up and o'er the braes
Wi' Jamie Claverslie.

II.

Syne up and spake the old fathèr—
“Sin May's to wed the Laird,
Ye'se bake us cakes o' fine, fine wheat,
Let a' be weel prepared—
I'se gar them bree us bonny ale,
Or else I'se gar them dree.”
—But May she's up and o'er the braes
Wi' Jamie Claverslie.

III.

Syne up and spake sweet May's sistèr,
“I trow I'll deck me fine,

For gin I do so at May's wedding,
 The next ane may be mine—
 And sae I'll don my kirtle green,
 And bride-maid will I be."
 —But May she's up and o'er the braes
 Wi' Jamie Claverslie.

IV.

Syne up and spake her brithers twain,
 "Our trouble we've na spared,
 We've gar'd her leave her simple swain,
 And marry wi' the Laird:
 And now we'll be baith blithe and gay,
 For 'tis our labour's fee."
 —But May she's up and o'er the braes
 Wi' Jamie Claverslie.

V.

But up and spake sweet May's mithèr,
 "Now where is our May gane?"
 Syne up and spake sweet May's sistèr,
 "O, I can find her nane."
 Syne spake the gudeman to his sons,
 "Now follow baith o' ye,
 I trow she's up and o'er the braes
 Wi' Jamie Claverslie."

VI.

They hadna ridden bare eight mile,
 Eight mile nor barely nine,
 When they were ware of a little lad
 Was keeping o' the kine.

They speired at him, "Now have ye seen
Our sister bright o' blee?
For, oh, she's up and o'er the braes
Wi' Jamie Claverslie!"

VII.

Then up and spake that little lad,
"I trow ye'd better turn,
For he is here, wi' mony a spear,
Beside the Rinning Burn.
No churl is he, but a right gude Laird,
And your sister bright o' blee
Will nae rue her riding o'er the braes
Wi' Jamie Claverslie!"



CHANSONETTE.

WHEN day is bright
With sunny light,
And earth is deckt with flowers :
The streamlets flow,
With a murmur low,
And the wind sings in the bowers.

But when night is come,
And in azure dome
The stars their vigils keep,
The reeds in the stream
In silence dream,
And the dew-kiss'd flowers sleep.

But with constant mind
The whispering wind
Chants ditties sweet and low,
And still, oh, still
Does the moonlit rill
With a gentle murmur flow !

Thus, though by day,
Where'er I stray,
Thine image goes with me,
In the night-time still,
Like wind and rill,
My heart remembers Thee!

THE HOME OF ROMANCE.

“ . . . Pensive light from a departed sun !”

WORDSWORTH

“An old, deserted Mansion.”

“THE HAUNTED HOUSE

ROMANCE—a queen dethronèd—sits
Within her ancient halls :
The ivy slowly creeps and climbs
About the crumbling walls :
Her fading splendour all around,
Like dying sunbeam, falls.

A dreary solitude and still
Fills those deserted rooms,
Whose mouldering tapestry is mock'd
By dusty cobweb-looms ;
While rotting fungus blueely lights
Their sad and solemn glooms.

In the once-merry banquet-hall
The grey-owl nightly chaunts ;
Within the turrets, dark and drear,
The bats have made their haunts ;
And, where the banner spread its folds,
The blood-red wall-flower flaunts !

Where lances topped the battlements,
The slender spear-grass blooms ;
And feather-grasses lightly wave,
Where once have nodded plumes ;
And, where the sentry humm'd a tune,
The drowsy beetle booms.

The watch-tower, where the beacon blazed,
Has caught a mimic glow
Of poppies, hymned by countless bees,
That ever come and go,
With dusty sides, and laden thighs,
And hummings deep and low.

Beneath the mossy, time-worn walls,
Within the mantled moat,
There lies no tiny shallop moor'd—
There swims no little boat,
Save where the gnat contrives her raft,
And sets her eggs afloat !

Aquatic blossoms crown the wave,
Or nestle round the brim ;

The gauze-winged dragon-fly alights
On rushes tall and slim—
The speckled frog and water-eft
'Mid golden lilies swim.

The waters, 'neath the bridge, no more,
The moving forms reflect
Of warrior in his gilded arms,
Or lady gaily deckt—
But gleaming Swift, and Kingfisher,
Bright-hued and golden-speckt.

The Kingfisher—that from the bridge
Watches his scaly prey,
And—while among the waving weeds
The heedless troutlets play—
Down-darting, breaks the mirror-wave,
And bears his spoil away.

The gleaming Swift—that builds her nest,
Secure from harm and dread,
Within the narrow loop-hole, whence
The wingèd arrow sped,
In days of yore, when this still moat
Was dyed a ghastly red.

Yet—spite of insect, bird, and flower,
And spite of cheery day—

O'er turret tall—o'er bower and hall,
A shadow lies for aye—
The misty presence of a queen,
Whose crown has pass'd away!

She sits within her dreary home,
And sees with dreamy eyes
The gallant doings of the Past—
Its glorious pageantries;
And "Hath the Present aught like this?"
Unceasingly she sighs!

But while she sits forlorn—as one
Who never may rejoice—
Throughout that castle old and dark,
The dwelling of her choice—
Through those still chambers, dim and drear,
There sounds a solemn Voice!

"The New becometh Old—the Night
Retreats before the Day—
In turn new Cycles must arrive,
In turn must pass away!
The Past had beauties—Present Time
Has charms as fair as they!

"And, if no more ye hear of deeds
Of gay and gallant knight,

Earth hath her heroes still, who strive
In silence for the Right—
Unheralded—to battle come
Truth—Patience—Firmness—Might !”

FOOTPRINTS.

A TALE OF DEVON.

“Lives of great men all remind us,
We may make our lives sublime,
And departing left behind us
Footprints in the sands of time.”

LONGFELLOW.

AH! the footprints of great men—what else in many cases have they left behind them? Do we know anything of Homer save by the footprints he has bequeathed, and we judge “*ex pede Herculem*” from the Iliad and the Odyssey, of the rare bard, whose birthplace is unknown, nay, whose very existence is doubted. Ossian, too, what has he left us but his footprints? Oh, our great men are

many who lie beneath no monuments, who have left us nothing save "footprints on the sands of Time."

We could write a volume upon footprints—from the days before the deluge—before Adam—down to the impression that the foot of yesterday has left fresh upon the shores of Life.

Let us go to the British Museum ; there we can see the tracks of the reptiles and birds, that crawled and hopped upon the wet sand and mud of the yet-young world.

Can you show me, on the shores of the Rubicon, the dents made by the hoofs of Cæsar's horse—when exclaiming, "the die is cast!" the great conqueror leapt over the tiny brook, and alighted with the clash of ringing armour on the green sward of Rome's territory.

Can you show me this? No! Well, I can show you the marks of the identical frog that would "go a-woeing," in despite of maternal advice and entreaties—there on the mud, that is now stone, are the marks he made in his travels. They remain an awful warning to disobedient children!

Look at these tracks on this slab of sandstone. They look as if some human antediluvian, suffering from an accumulation of gouty fingers, gatherings,

and whitlows, had fallen on his face upon the sand, and left the impression of his swollen hands in it.

But no—Professor Owen will tell you, that they are “Ichnolites—the footprints of a gigantic reptile of littoral habits, belonging to the Batrachian (or frog) order:” though between you and me, they are the marks of the well-known Roley Poley, who went a-wooing probably long before there was any Adam to have any Eve to woo!

In the fossil island at Sydenham, may be seen his effigy—the terror of all juveniles, who, wandering from their parties, come by chance to the water-side, and do not recognize in the huge creature before them their old friend of Gammon and Spinach celebrity!

Professor Owen will talk to you, too, about the *Dinornis* and *Palæomys*—why, bless you, the former is the duck that “gobbled him up” (the frog, not the Professor), and the latter was once fair Mistress Mouse herself, and I have no doubt that future geological researches will restore to us the wheel at which she was “sitting to spin.”

Look at these tracks of birds by the sea-side: look at the footprints of the sea, that rippled over the sand: the marks of bird and wave

are now to be seen impressed in the solid rock !

But the stone is pitted all over. Did the small-pox exist in præ-Adamite days, and having no human being to attack, exercise itself upon the clay that was some day to be man ? No, these little holes are the marks of a shower that fell, perhaps, before there was any Adam to wish for an umbrella, or to make a substitute for one from the leaf of an antediluvian plantain, or of the dock that was the founder of the family.

See, here is the trail of a creature of the tortoise or turtle tribe. Nature, it seems, had Aldermen in her eye even then, and provided for them from the earliest ages.

How strange it is, that of nations that have peopled the world since Adam, no trace remains.

Who shall point out the cities of the Medes and Persians ?

Where are the ten tribes of Israel ?

Yet, here imprinted on solid rock, is the record of a huge toad that sprawled upon the slime of a recent world. Why the great pyramid of Cheops, with all the dusty, rotten, regal mummies it contains, is but a thing of yesterday compared with the slab marked with the ripple of the tide of waters, that

had never reflected a human form, but only the shapes of those strange monsters of which we can but dream—subtle geologists and anatomists though we be! Why that slab was of the very sand first set to bound the sea, upon it perchance was drawn the line of which an Almighty Voice proclaimed, “Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther!”

In poetry and romance too, what beautiful little bits do we owe to footprints. Need anyone be reminded of those lines of Wordsworth’s about Lucy Gray? The story, told in a few touches, of the footmarks traced—

“Into the middle of the plank;
And further there was none!”

has often drawn tears down our cheeks, when I was a child; as the horse hoofs in the sand by the Kelpie’s flow have dimmed our eyes in after years. Oh! the picture of desolation that rises before me—the far-spread sands and the ebb tide foaming and tossing beneath the light of the rising sun, and those deep-dented horse tracks along the beach to the edge of the treacherous quicksand, upon the slimy, oozy surface of which, dragged and dabbled with the salt liquid sand, lies the long black

plume, and the Master of Ravenswood is gone !
Never in hallowed mould shall rest his bones—
never kind eyes shed tears upon his corse.

“He has stabled his steed in the Kelpie’s flow ;
And his name shall be lost for evermo’e.”

Who has read the sad fate of poor Ravenswood without gulping down an indescribable something in his throat, and closing his eyes for a moment, because the words swam so before him ?

Who has not gone into an agony of anxiety and terror with Robinson Crusoe, at the discovery of the print of the naked foot on the sands of Juan Fernandez ? With one exception — that exception being the old goat’s eyes in the cavern—it is the most terrible part of the whole book. One can picture the long-bearded sailor in his hairy garments, with his two guns over his shoulder ; with his parrot, perhaps, perched on his queer conical goat-skin cap, and his dog gambolling over the sands before him.

Can you not fancy the start he gives when he sees that impression on the shore, a start that disturbs Polly on his precarious perch, and draws from him an exclamation of surprise and anger :

while the dog comes running back and begins to sniff about the suspicious mark.

Those who have had the good fortune to fall in with Inglis's "Rambles in the Footsteps of Don Quixote," know what an amusing ramble it is. Inglis seems not only to have trodden in the steps of the worthy Don, but to have stepped into the shoes of Cervantes himself, so well does he enter into the spirit of the great Spaniard—or does the great Spaniard's spirit enter into him, as the spirit-rappers would say?

The very headings of the chapters are own brothers to those in the history of "La Mancha's Knight."

Lazaro, the Barber, the descendant of the veritable Barber Nicholas of Miguel Esteban, is a glorious fellow! We do not know whether he is a fact or a fiction, and we close the book almost believing that there was a Don Quixote and that there did exist a Barber Nicholas whose descendants intermarried with the children of Sancho, (for how else are we to account for the rare wit and sparkling humour and roguery of Inglis's friend the barber, Lazaro—*alias* Nicholas?) Truly, those footsteps are excellent, and many a merry laugh have we had over them!

But the pencil, as well as the pen, is indebted to footprints for some of its happiest efforts. There

lies before me now the picture of a snowy slope with a tower embosomed in trees in the distance. The moon is glistening on the white expanse over which, ah me! sad type of fair Eveleen's fate, is to be seen the path of the false "Lord of the Valley."

Beautifully has Maclise illustrated this, one of the sweetest of Moore's poems. The snow seems to gleam in the cold moonlight and fair Eveleen's bower has an indistinct softness that one almost expects to see blown off like a mist by the sighing night breezes.

But footprints in the snow tell tales of faithful as well as false love!

The mighty Charlemagne is gazing out of the palace window. The moon is up, and throws upon the floor the vast shadow of the gigantic Emperor who, clad in his simple otter-skin doublet, leans upon his sword, and with bent brows ponders over his plans of conquest.

But if he is laying plans of conquest, in his daughter Emma's chamber, Eginhart is trying to discover a plan of flight. Long had the young secretary worshipped the Emperor's eldest child, and in time his constancy was rewarded by her love. Fearing the anger of Charlemagne, the lovers met only secretly at night, and this evening so wrapt

were they in happy dreams that it was only when Eginhart strove to tear himself away from his beloved, that they perceived there had been a heavy fall of snow.

What was to be done? To walk across the courtyard, would be to discover all, and would bring Eginhart to the scaffold. But when did woman's heart fail to aid the loved one? With tottering feet, but unflinching faith and love and courage did the young princess bear her lover across the snow-covered court-yard. Ah! those wavering little foot-prints—deep-impressed because of the dear burden; if the snow melted in the next morning's sun, were *they* ever forgotten by Eginhart?

From his window, Charlemagne saw all, and touched by the proof of their true love, he bestowed Emma's hand upon the happy secretary, dowering her with the rich province of the Odenwald. And at Erbach, they still show the tomb of those two faithful hearts!

Let us not forget the Indian, and his wonderful—almost superhuman—sagacity in following a trail. Often and often in the *Last of the Mohicans*, and the rest of that series, we have wondered at those swarthy savages, tracking the enemy with the blood-thirsty, untiring, undying perseverance of a slot

hound ; a trodden leaf, a bent blade of grass, a broken twig, show at a glance to their experienced eyes where the foot of a foe has fallen.

Not long ago died Logan, the chief of the Omawhaws—the narrative of his fate was worthy of the pen of Fenimore Cooper himself.

While the tribe was out on its summer hunting expedition, a large band of Sioux—their natural enemies—was discovered camped near them.

Logan at once sent his tribe back, as the odds were too great to risk a battle, while he himself stayed—alone—to mislead the foe, and give his people—who were told to conceal their trail as carefully as possible—time to escape. Off he galloped at full speed, reaching many miles off a spot from which he could see the encampment he had left—here he dismounted, and laid his materials for a fire, and led his horse round and round until the ground seemed to indicate a large body of warriors.

This done, he set fire to the brushwood, and remounted. Before he rode off, he turned and saw in the distance the Sioux gathered around the real camp. Of course, they soon perceived the new fire, and without waiting to find the trail, made towards it at full speed.

By the time they reached it, Logan had ridden

on and lit a fresh beacon some distance further on : and seeing as they imagined the camping place deserted only recently, the Sioux galloped on towards the new one. Here they found all exactly the same as it was at the last, but growing suspicious, they lit torches and examining the ground discovered that they had been misled by the courage and ingenuity of one man ; with loud yells, some of them began to follow the trail of Logan while others retraced their steps to the first camp to discover, if possible, the direction in which the Omawhaws had escaped.

Logan knew when he saw the torches, that his plan was discovered, and nothing was left for him but to run for it. He knew, however, that his stratagem was successful in so far, that his tribe were now beyond pursuit, so trusting to the speed of his horse, he bent his course homewards.

But alas ! tracing him by his footsteps, on came the unwearying foe. Daylight was beginning to break, when, thinking himself out of danger, Logan slackened his speed, but only to see behind him his pursuers in the grey light of morning urging their sturdy mustangs along his trail. His wearied horse had begun already to show signs of

giving out, when he arrived at a little ravine, where he met a girl drawing water from a brook, which ran through the valley. To her his tale was soon told, and with a pitying heart and noble, daring ingenuity that would have done credit to the first lady in Europe, the Indian girl concealed him in a cave, and mounting his horse, rode on and taking advantage of the brook, managed to mislead the Sioux by a wrong trail. She then returned and giving Logan his horse, told him to ride home in safety, for his pursuers were thrown off his track.

But, alas! Fortune had determined to betray him! As he crossed the brow of a hill, he was met by some of the Sioux returning from their unsuccessful pursuit of the Omawhaws.

Logan turned and fled, loading and firing as he went, and not a few of the Sioux braves bit the dust. At length, his worn-out horse stumbled and fell; Logan had barely time to gain his feet before his pursuers were upon him. Even then, beset with "fearful odds," he died not alone, but like a knight of old Romance, made for himself a death-bed of his slaughtered foes. Poor fellow!

he was the last of the rare brave Indian Chiefs, of whom we have often read in novels, but who were of late years scarce in real life.

And so ends a sad tale of followed footprints.

Thus far we have been looking at the imprints of the deer-skin mocassin, of the naked sole of the Carib, the delicate *chaussure* of a German princess, the fur-trimmed, tassel'd boots of a false lord, or the iron-plated, spur-adorned foot of the poor mad noble Gentleman and Knight of La Mancha—but there are other footprints that we read of—and not unstained with blood horribly spilt! The heavy nailed shoes of the murderer leave behind them around the scene of crime the clearly marked impressions that, pointing to the very gap where a few nails are wanting, give over the blood-stained wretch into the hands of justice.

Faugh! it smells of blood! it is too horrible to be talked of—this burly ruffian whose footprints in the garden, beneath the window, show how he watched the miserable old man putting away his store of money, ere he burst in, and took away the feeble, fading, flickering life that never injured him in word or deed.

Oh! cursed Love of Gold, are not thy footprints

seared into the hearts of the living—oh! too—too often?

Now the story which we have been all this time prologising, is a tale of the Love of Gold.

“Oh, that he were here to write me down an ass!”

“MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.”

In the year of our Lord 185—, the village of Skillington Minor, in the beautiful county of Devon, was blessed with a clerk and sexton, by name Keziah Bennet—yes, gentle reader, we repeat, *Keziah* Bennet!

When first he came into the world, great was the commotion in the house of the Bennets: all the old women of Skillington, not to mention a few from the surrounding villages, assembled at the clerk's house (clerkships are hereditary in the West), to determine upon a name, not only for our hero, but for his brother, the goodwife having presented her husband with twins, a circumstance which disconcerted that worthy soul no less than it did the aunt, who had prepared a pincushion to hail the arrival of the expected babe. Of course, the duality of the

arrival necessitated a change of design, and a further outlay in minnikin pins; and after all, the "S" added to make the sentence "Welcome, little strangerS," destroyed the balance of the pattern, and ran so close to the border as to betray the fact of the twins being a (shall we say "pleasant?") surprise.

Had the clerk's wife read Shakspeare, she might have been content, on the "rose-with-any-other-name" theory, to call the new-comers Johns, or Roberts, or Billies—those common ante-fixes that flesh is heir to; but, alas! the extent of her dramatic experience went no farther than "The Monk, the Mask, and the Murderer; or, the Haunted Hermit," performed by Richardson's company in Farmer Grist's barn; and so the poor babe was doomed to a misnomer.

After long consultation, Uzziah and Uriah were the chosen nominatives—the clerk asserting that, as he "belonged to the Church," his children ought to be scriptural.

Over and over again were the names repeated—over and over again drummed into the head of the godmother, who was an elderly lady of not very strong mind, but of considerable possessions. Rumour whispered that it was because the old dame

kept a stocking full of guineas, and had two houses of her own in Skillington, that the Bennets hunted up a relationship to her, and requested her offices as sponsor.

The Sunday came: the christening breakfast began, the cloaks and hoods had been duly admired, when the clerk was called away. The rector had been suddenly requested to do duty for his brother, who was ill, at a village some miles off, and Bennet was required to drive him over, as the worthy clergyman himself was not a son of Nimshi. This untoward occurrence rather disconcerted the christening party; but Bennet, as a clerk and a Christian, was bound to do his duty without a murmur—and he did it! As he wound his comforter for the last turn round his neck, he said, in an impressive tone of voice, to the godmother, “Remember, Goody—Uzziah and Uriah!”

“Oh, yes—Huzziah and Buziah!” said the old dame; but, luckily for the rector, Bennet did not hear the mistake, or it might have shaken his allegiance.

Now, in the absence of the regular clerk, Ziba Coggle, the village butcher, was accustomed to perform the responsive duties; and accordingly, at afternoon service, the curate and he stood at the

font, prepared to make Christians of the two little howling heathens who were borne down the aisle in all the bravery of white hoods and lace veils.

Uzziah was christened properly by his appointed name; but when our hero's turn came, the old godmother's memory failed her, and, after a short pause, she bolted out "Keziah!" Of course, neither curate nor clerk knew the sex of the child, and so, sad to relate, the poor boy was as irrevocably tied to the female name as if he had married the daughter of Job, and from that day forth was called by no other title than Kizzy Bennet.

It is needless to describe the fury of old Bennet, when he discovered one of his brace of boys transformed into a girl in the register.

Suffice it to say, that his rage made him forget the stocking full of guineas and the two cottages in Skillington, and his reproaches and revilings were such, that when the old godmother died, she left neither the one nor the other to Keziah, whose brother Uzzy had not survived his teething.

Thus godmother and brother, and, ere long, mother—died; nor did the father delay in following his wife: so "Jabez Bennet slept with his

fathers, and Keziah, his son, amen'd in his stead !”

One would think that a Certain Party, who is said to have an abundance of employment for idle hands, would have little business with a man of Keziah's industrious habits, and, moreover, with the clerk of a church ; but, alas ! even the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries have their temptations, so the humblest sexton may not hope to escape without his temptation.

Christmas-Day had come in with a fall of snow, and the robins were hopping in the holly-trees, and trying, in the universal gaiety of the season, to get up sham berries with their red breasts. All the girls in the village, from Ann to Zilpah, had been kissed by all the lads, from Abel to Zachary, through all the permutations and combinations of the alphabet, a return of which kisses, for the benefit of census-lovers, could only be given in by the mistletoe.

The bells had rung the people into church, although with rather irregular peals—“*nec mirum*,” for the Big Bell was far from sober, and the Tenor ditto decidedly in a state of cyder.

The service had been gone through with due choral accompaniments ; the congregation—with

the exception of those of the choir who had gone round carol-singing all the previous night, and were now comfortably dozing in the gallery—had been edified with a stirring sermon. At length, all the children and non-communicants having departed, Keziah, in all the rustling grandeur of a stuff gown, began to collect the offertory in a carved-oak alms-dish.

Ah! Keziah, Keziah! be not so proud; “let not him that putteth on his clerklly apparel boast as he that taketh it off.” Thou shalt have more in thy pocket, and much on thy mind, when thou hangest up thy gown again on its peg in the vestry!

After the service had concluded, Keziah removed the plate and the white cloth; he emptied the alms-dish on the table before the rector, and after having wished that good clergyman a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and receiving the same wish in return, he retired to the vestry to lock up the silver.

The rector was gone, and Keziah was all alone; the chalice and paten were in their places, and the alms-dish was about to follow, when something, glittering within it, caught the clerk’s eye! In a moment the cover was off, and there, fixed in a

crack in the corner—in the trap laid for poor Kizzy's soul—gleamed a bright, shining half-crown.

Was it the Old Serpent himself, or did the eye of King George the Fourth wink at the lost clerk?

Would it be missed?

"No," said Avarice. "Who could tell that it had not been given to the rector?"

"It is not honest, friend Keziah!" said Conscience; but he spoke very low, and Avarice drowned his speech altogether by whistling, "I love my shilling, my jolly, jolly shilling!"

"Besides," suggested Hypocrisy, "it was intended to do good, and it will benefit you as much as any one!"

"Do you remember, Kizzy, old boy!" whispered Comfort, "those rare woollen socks in Mother Muggles's window, ticketed 'tenpence?'"

"Thirty pence is two-and-sixpence," broke in Arithmetic; "three tens are thirty!"

"Three pairs of woollen socks," continued Comfort. "One pair every week, and one to keep for Sundays only. They will cherish thy lean shanks, old fellow!"

And so, one after another, whispered the evil

passions of Keziah Bennet, until, at last, Conscience was elbowed out of the council. Four times did Keziah unbutton his pocket, and four times did he half withdraw the coin; but Avarice and his backers prospered, and the clerk buttoned his pocket up once more, and strode out of the vestry with the price of his soul in the right-hand pocket of his trowsers; and so Keziah Bennet became a son of perdition.

The next morning, Keziah hurried off to Muggles's warehouse; the purchase was quickly effected, and, with the stockings under his arm, he was soon trudging back through the snow to his own dwelling.

Why did Keziah, as he reached his door, drop his parcel in the snow? why did his teeth chatter, and his tongue refuse to utter even the accustomed "Lord have mercy upon us" of the Litany?

Poor Keziah! his sleep had been troubled—his dreams had been awful! Demons with open-work carved-oak faces, like the alms-box lid, danced around him, while three large fiends in woollen stockings, gartered with vipers, scooped out his eyes and replaced them by two burning hot George the Fourth half-crowns.

Unrefreshed by such slumbers, his mind was in no fit state to receive with firmness the shock it met with now. All round the cottage, printed in the snow, were the impressions of hoofs!

Down on his knees in terror dropped Keziah; but instantly fearing that he might be seen and suspected (how thin-skinned guilt is!) he fell upon all-fours, as if to examine the awful marks.

Too plainly, here and there, his fearful eyes saw traces as though the hoof had been cloven!

"Pshaw! it's a donkey!" he murmured, trying to look brave; but experience told him that a donkey's track would lead somewhither, while these footprints seemed to have neither beginning nor end.

With his hair erect on his head, his teeth chattering, and his knees trembling, Keziah hurried in, and fell in a swoon on his bed.

When he recovered, he saw before him the stockings for which he had bartered his immortal soul, lying arranged in pairs on the table.

In agony and terror did Keziah pass the day, and he was truly delighted when his old friend,

Zachary Drew, the carpenter, dropped in to smoke a pipe with him.

Long did he keep him, and generously did he entertain him.

Zachary little dreamt the real reason of Keziah's hospitality, when the old fellow brought out a bottle of cyder wine, and begged him to stay and make a night of it.

Late at night Drew departed; but before he went, he put his host to bed. Now, Drew was barely capable, as will be seen, of doing that kind office for himself; however, he managed to put on Keziah's night garments all right, with the exception of the night-cap; this had fallen upon the ground, and, after one or two vain lurches to recover it, the carpenter was compelled to relinquish the design. In lieu of his usual head-gear, therefore, he wrapped up Bennet's head in the identical woollen stockings, which the clerk had laid on the chest of drawers.

This done, he wished Keziah "gooright," and received the reply that he was a "joll' ole half-crown," and staggered home.

After a slight search of an hour or so, Zachary discovered the latch, and reeled up-stairs, where he found his rushlight burning. Carefully did he fold

up the candle, and lay it in the drawer, and strenuously did he blow at his Sunday collar, as it lay on the table, in the vain hope of extinguishing it. With an unsteady hand did he put his boots in the basin, and throw the water-jug down the stairs into the kitchen to be blacked in the morning by his work-boy. Almost before the jug shivered on the stones below, Drew's eyes had closed, and he sunk fast asleep on the floor, with his head in the night-shade, for the rush-light of which he had just before so carefully provided.

The next morning Keziah opened his eyes to the consciousness of a splitting head-ache; he raised his hand instinctively to his forehead, but withdrew it instantly, as if an adder had bit him. He sprang up wildly in the bed, and, scattered by the sudden motion, the six individual stockings fell in a shower around him upon the counterpane.

Those stockings were doomed to haunt him. Demon hands (he thought) had laid them out on his table during his swoon. Demon hands had piled them upon his sleeping head, until their weight—the weight of sin—had racked his throbbing temples.

With a creeping, shivering dread he thrust first one foot and then the other into a pair of the awful leg-casings; but when once they were on, and he had had a pull of brandy, he began to pluck up courage, and was almost himself when he issued from his cottage door. Alas! it was only to discover fresh traces of the hoof'd—perchance horn'd—unearthly visitor of the preceding night. Keziah Bennet trembled in his woollen stockings!

Human courage could bear no more: the clerk rushed into his house again, and fell upon his knees, praying far more earnestly and fervently than he had ever done with the yellow fringe of the reading-desk hangings tickling his bald head.

In less than ten minutes Mrs. Muggles was summoned into the shop by the tinkling of the bell affixed to the door.

There stood Bennet, looking sheepish and miserable, nor did his confusion decrease when he explained the reason of his visit.

“Will you—that is—I—there's—oh—I—I—I paid half-a-crown yesterday for those—” (His lips refused to name those terrible stockings).

“Woollen stockings,” suggested Mrs. Muggles,

unable to account for Keziah's tremor—although her conscience accused her of the quantity of cotton in the so-called woollen articles.

“Yes—ah—well—I—I—I've a liking for that half-crown—here's another—please would you look in the till—would you mind letting me have it again?”

Of course, Mrs. Muggles did not mind, and the till was speedily emptied on the counter. You may be sure no voice whispered to Keziah to abstract any of the silver now, though it might have been easily done, for Mrs. Muggles had unbounded confidence in the clerk.

It did not take very long to discover the coin. To Bennet's eyes, the demoniacal medal seemed to give a wink of diabolical meaning.

“It looks very like a bad 'un,” remarked the shop-keeper as she swept the money back into the till.

“It *is* a bad 'un,” ejaculated Keziah, although with a deeper meaning, and holding the terrible thing as gingerly as if it were burning hot, he turned and left the shop.

It so happened, luckily for the clerk, that, on the previous day, the rector had been away on a Christ-

mas visit, and had not long returned, when Bennet called to restore the money that had nearly cost him so much. He was ushered into the study, where he soon told how he had found the half-crown; suppressing, of course, the story of his temptation and fall, which the worthy pastor did not for a moment dream of.

As the latter was going to lock the money up in his desk, he let it by accident slip from his fingers. It came down upon the table with a dull leaden thump, very different from the clear ringing sound of silver!

“Why, bless my soul!” exclaimed the parson, “it is a bad one—a counterfeit, Keziah! I trust it was given accidentally: I hope no one is so wicked and blasphemous as to do such a thing intentionally!”

“Pure wickedness, I’m afraid, Sir!” moaned the clerk, as he thought how the money had only been sent to destroy him.

“Don’t be uncharitable, Keziah! Don’t be uncharitable—your own good character is not a warrant for crying out upon others. We all want a little charity shown us sometimes.”

Keziah winced at this unintentional thrust, and was not at all sorry to leave the room. When

he reached home, the first thing he did, was to cast the six stockings—the bait of the Evil One—into the fire. Awful was the stench that accompanied this holocaust, and in it Keziah fancied he detected a strong smack of sulphureous vapour.

The same night, Keziah, sitting by his fire, dozed off into a quiet sleep—for the last two nights had been too troubled to give him any real rest. He woke with a start as the clock struck twelve; the candle had burnt down into its socket, and the last curl of smoke was ascending from the wick: but the moon was shining brightly, and Keziah had just made up his mind for economical reasons to retire to bed by its light, when he saw a strange black shadow projected on the blind. He could distinguish a head, and from it rose two—what? Heaven help the poor lost creature, surely they were not *horns!*

The door rattled—the latch clicked, and above the loud beating of his own heart, Keziah could hear the breathing of that fearful visitant! He remembered that, contrary to his usual custom, he had forgotten to slide the bolt; the Devil—it could be none but he—would enter and carry him off bodily!

Shaking in every limb, his heart thumping





[TO FACE PAGE 127.]

like a sledge-hammer, he tottered across the floor ;
“there might yet be time to shoot the bolt!”
But barely had he got half way, when the door
burst open, and with a loud yell, Keziah Bennet
fell fainting at the feet of—an ass !

Yes, gentle reader, the mysterious marks were the
footprints of a little orphan jackass, that had been
accustomed every night to regale himself on
Keziah’s brocoli, but as no snow had fallen before
Christmas-day, his former visits were unnoticed. The
projecting thatch had protected the marks round the
house under the eaves, while the prints without
had been obliterated by succeeding falls, and as the
weather was particularly calm, there was no wind
to make the snow drift.

The fact of the stockings being unfolded and
laid on the table is as easily explained. Old Polly
Draggle, one of the village crones, saw, as she went
by, the parcel lying at Keziah’s door. She carried
it in, and seeing the clerk, as she supposed, in a
drunken doze, she satisfied her womanly failing—
curiosity—by opening the packet, and examining its
contents.

And this is the True and Authentic Account of
one appearance of the Devil in Devonshire !

In the winter of 1854, what various conjectures

were raised as to the cause of the mysterious foot-prints near the Exe.

Rats, Mice, Kangaroos, Birds, and Badgers all came in turn to be proposed as the origin.

Some suggested they were the tracks of a donkey, but others immediately knocked the suggestion on the head by saying the marks were not like those of an ass. Probably these Dogmatic Dogberries were right, especially as they had the opportunity of judging from self-experience—yet we feel tempted to say with Conrade, “Away, you are an ass—you are an ass!”

Depend upon it, however, that—although not exactly of the Fakenham species we have just related—all the stories of the Devil in Devonshire were, somehow or other, intimately connected with asses!

ONLY A FLOWER.

THE flower Thou gavest me from Thine hair,—
That single rose that, pale and white,
Gleamed 'mid Thy tresses like a star,
Or one lone snow-flake in the night—

That rose, Love, by Thy sweetness taught
All fairest blossoms to eclipse,
Its excellence of perfume caught
By hanging near those perfect lips !

And now, with all its hundred leaves,
That flower is a book to me,
Whose every page and every word
Is speaking still of only Thee.

It tells me Nature gave it birth,
To be a type, my Love, of Thee—
The fairest Flower of the earth—
And Thy remembrance unto me.

It tells me that the snowy leaves,
Which round about its bosom fold,
Conceal beneath their purity
A heart—like Thine, Love,—all of gold!

And how—Thy beauty's type beside,
So modestly, so sweetly worn—
The bright green leaves a flower hide,
Like Thy pure heart, without a thorn!

That rose amid Thy raven locks
In beauty bloomed, till laid aside—
Like my sad heart when Thou art gone—
It withered silently—and died!

Yet—for because it died for Thee,
Amid Thy night-like tresses, Sweet,
Upon my heart that rose shall be
Until that heart shall cease to beat!

THE SPARKLING WATERS.

ADOWN—adown,
Down to the rolling sea
The streamlet's waters run
With noisy glee !

ON—ever on,
On to the rocky steep
The sparkling wavelets flow,
Then downward leap.

FAST—ever fast
Over the rocky edge
Down leaps the foaming tide
From ledge to ledge !

WHY—tell me why
So swiftly on ye flee ?
Bright waters, tell me why
Ye seek the sea ?

Why, alas! why
Would ye so soon pass by,
And, falling in the sea,
Forgotten—die?



THE TWO BATTLE FIELDS.



stood by the bank of a streamlet,
Not far from its mossy source,
Where with murmured delight it trembled
Down its sloping and winding course.

The water was clear and gleaming,
And each drop of the sparkling spray
On the grasses that fringed its margin
Like a glittering diamond lay.

But as slowly I wandered, watching
The weeds in its shallow bed,
A sod fell into the streamlet
Detached by my careless tread.

And where with its roots and fibres
It had broken away the sward,
Half hidden in earth I discovered
The hilt of a shattered sword.

Then vanished the scene around me,
The streamlet ran clear no more,
And the grasses that fringed its margin
Were trampled and stained with gore.

And the shouts and the din of battle
On my hearing began to rise,
And the folds of the hostile banners
Waved proudly before mine eyes.

The plumes in the wind were dancing,
The sabres were flashing bright,
And thus with the eye of fancy
Beheld I the Sedgmoor fight !

No thought had I of the battle,
Or the blood that of yore was spilt,
Till my careless foot discovered
That broken and rusted hilt :

For the streamlet so gently murmured,
And the grass was so fresh and green,
That there rose at my heart no whisper
To tell of that fearful scene !

* * * *

And I know of a heart that is tranquil,
Speaking praises and thanks alway,
From the rise of the rosy morning
Till the soft-tinted close of day !

And it does little deeds of kindness
With such soul-cheering happiness,
You would think that by hear-say only
It knew of the world's distress.

And save when the jarring heart-string
Is touched by a heedless word,
You never would dream that Sorrow
Had broken a single chord.

But a word will recall the struggle
That scathed it in days of yore,
When the fountain of Youth in that bosom
Was darkened for evermore.

And that seemingly tranquil bosom
By the traces revealed unsought
We know was the field, where aforetime
A Battle of Life was fought!

WHITE WINGS.

At my feet the Ocean surges
With its never-ceasing roar—
Singing war-songs, chanting dirges—
Evermore—ah, evermore !

All the sea is wild commotion—
All its breakers white as shrouds ;
While, afar across the ocean,
Spreads the shadow of the clouds.

But I know the sun is beaming,
For—beyond that shadow dark—
I can see his radiance gleaming
In some distant white-wing'd bark.

Thus the Ocean of To-Morrow
Breaks upon Life's rocky shore,
With its turmoil—with its sorrow—
Evermore—ah, evermore !

Flowing, ebbing—ebbing, flowing,
Its emotions change and glide,
Fears of unknown trouble throwing
Solemn shadows o'er the tide.

But beyond—in farthest distance,
Far beyond all earthly things,
We can see the New Existence
In the gleam of angel-wings.

Angel-wings of the departed,
Bright with rays of fairer skies,
Are revealed to the true-hearted,
Through the Spirit's purer eyes.

PANURGUS PEBBLES.

A LITTLE OF EVERYTHING IS NOTHING OF ANYTHING.

A JACK-of-all-trades and master of none was Panurgus Pebbles : from the birchen tingle of boyhood to the mental pains of man's estate his shallow versatility was his bane : from the first kick and crow in long clothes to the silent rigidity in the shroud, his life, a patchwork harlequin, was ever slapping and flapping him. His mind was like Jacques' motley fool, or rather like a kaleidoscope—yet wanted reflection—the smoked glasses in that instrument, that by doubling the confused mass of glass splinters, &c., changes disorder into a “pattern of neatness.”

Where Pebbles picked up his scraps of knowledge, Heaven only knows ! Pœkilus Pigment, my



artist friend, has ever beside his easel a spare canvass whereon he bestows at random the dabs of colour that remain in his brush, while he is working up his great picture for the Academy. On this canvass, upon the foundation thus laid, he afterwards depicts such a subject as the prevailing tints may suggest. Can it be that Nature, when supplying the crania of a number of mortals with brains of different tendencies, casts into the head of Pebbles the superabundant cerebral scraps.

Panurgus was the son of an old Squire, whose spouse was a fashionable Lady.

The father took him out for a ride ;

The mother sent him to school ;

The paternal care taught him to sing, "Tally ho !"

The maternal drilled him in the "Busy Bee ;"

The Squire declared that his son should be "a man, not a milksop !"

The lady said hers should be "a gentleman, not a stable-boy."

Between the two influences, Panurgus got off easily. If he did not go to school his father would screen him from his merited punishment ; if he refused to ride a spirited horse his mother shielded

him from his father's wrath; if he failed in the melody of "Tally ho!" the lady would express her pleasure that he did not take a liking to "a song that was not fitted for polite society." To which the squire retorted by observing—"that as to the matter of that, he did not think Dr. Watts was much better. How about that line—

“‘Abroad in the meadows to see the young lambs
Go sporting about by the side of their ——’

A proper word truly to be put in the mouths of children!"

So far his piebald breeding and disposition did our hero no harm—at least no present harm—but in after years the effects of these two counter-influences came upon him.

It was not only in his studies that our hero shone superficially. Was there a game of cricket proposed, who so ready as Pebbles to make one of a side? But without that genuine love of the sport, which would have sustained him during his fielding, he soon got tired, and the boys, knowing his failing, always sent him in last, being sure that his wickets once down, Pebbles would slink off to some other pastime. Not that he was a great loss, for

like all who do not enter into the spirit of the game *con amore*, he was a slovenly player, and went among the cricket-lovers by the soubriquet of Butter-fingers; while among the boating community (for the school was near the river Weir and the boys had a whole fleet of "dingies" on it) he was known as Crab Pebbles—a title derived from his frequent successes in catching those crustacea while rowing. To the uninitiated we will explain! He who would capture a crab, must seat himself in a rowing-boat, and taking an oar pull it scientifically until the vessel gets a swift onward motion, by seamen entitled "head-way." When this is accomplished let our friend turn his oar over slightly and try to lift it out of the water straight. There is a slight splash—a jerk—and the operator finds the handle of his oar in his abdominal region, and almost before he can wink, his head descends and his heels fly up, and the experiment is concluded—the crab is caught!

Poor Pebbles! his heels were oftener in the air than his scull in the water; for he had another way of "capturing cancers," namely by never putting his oar in the water at all, merely skimming it along the surface, so that, air not offering the same resistance as water, the force of his own stroke shot

poor Panurgus into the lap of his neighbour on the next thwart. This evolution was called by the boys "Pebbles's pull," a stroke of which (as Featherwell, the best oar in the school averred) "one half was in the air and the other half out of the water."

Then what disasters did not Panurgus get into, when, with the bag of paper shreds, the hare—one of the best runners in the school—set off across country! About twenty minutes after, the pack would start helter skelter, over hedge and ditch, where the paper was thickly scattered; or wandering at fault over a ploughed field to recover the scent. Some time or other in the day was sure to see Panurgus pounded in a field, or up to his neck in a ditch, or stuck head-downward in a hedge, as if measuring the wide expanse of heaven with his legs in lieu of compasses. But in spite of all this, Panurgus would often be in at the death. His plan was to climb a high tree, and to try to spy out the hare in the distance, or if he could not see him, to watch the direction in which the hounds were going, and draw his conclusions therefrom. He knew that the hare was sure to make for some farmer's house, where he was known, or else to some little village ale-house (for of course, the ushers were not "mighty hunters," and did not join in

hare and hounds), and settling from the running where the hare was likely to be, he would set off by the road, and generally fell in with the pack not far from the hare's form (generally a wooden one, on which stood a pewter, whence the hare drank refreshment in the shape of beer).

In due course of time Panurgus left Bedleigh to enter at the University. During his stay at school what prizes had he gained? None! He was second or third in several classes—poor Jack-of-all-trades—and the sprinkling of knowledge that he had of everything in general, would, if it had been applied to one thing in particular, have gained him a reward; but no: it was fated that Pebbles should be a little of everything, and nothing of anything, and so he was!

At College he met several of his old school-fellows, who had left Bedleigh before him. "Of course among so many old companions Pebbles did not lack for friends," say you. But he did!

"I say, Featherwell," said Coxon of Brasenose, "what sort of a fellow is Pebbles of St. Mark's; he was at school with you, wasn't he?"

"Humph! Yes," replies Featherwell, now Captain of the O. U. B. C., and immensely popular

among the boating men. "Awful muff! Can't pull two strokes without catching as many crabs; he'd upset the veriest tub on the river."

And so the subject is dropped;—and Panurgus too!

Four gownsmen are strolling along the High-street when our hero passes.

"That's an old Bedleigh man," says one of the quartette. "Horrid stick!" grunts Bales, the Sec. of the St. Mark's Coll. Cricket Club. "He can't handle his bat a bit. I didn't know anything of him at school."

"He comes from our part of the world," says Snaffle of Merton. "I have seen him out with the governor's hounds: he funk'd at the first hedge, and I never saw him again!"

"Look at his dwass!" drawls the elegant Pulker. "One would think he—aw—dwassed himself with a knife and fawk—aw. When he was at school he always had five patches about his person; two—aw—that he knelt on; two—aw—that he leant on, and one—aw—that he sat on—aw!"

Poor Pebbles—had you only entered heart and soul into one pursuit at school, how different had your reception been! If you had given your attention to aquatics, how proudly would Featherwell

have introduced you to the University eight ! Ah—those crabs—truly cancers that ate away your popularity ! If you had been a cricketer, Bales would have been proud of you ;—had you given your attention to your toilette, Pulker would have honoured you with his arm down the Broad-walk on Show Sunday ; had you been a hard worker or prizeman at school, Mugger and Grind, of Balliol, would have hailed you with joy, and have proposed and seconded you at the Union. But no ; Jack-of-all-trades and master of none was thy character, and between the various stools we have mentioned camest thou to the ground, oh Pebbles ! Nay, man, never grumble—thy betters have been so tilted up before thee. These stools of thine are but humble joint-stools—three-legged wooden stools—lowly ones ; but thy betters have fallen from higher. Did not Lord Thistledown strive to keep his balance and obtain office with Conservative and Liberal ? When, lo ! away glided the two stools, and down came my Lord upon the floor of the House, amid peals of “ inextinguishable laughter ! ” Nay, more, when mighty nations were at variance, have not certain little petty, pettifogging Kinglings striven to appear neutral, and to balance between the contending parties ? And have not they had

their fall, or will they not soon? Aye, Panurgus, and therefore bless thy stars that thou didst fall from a joint-stool instead of a lofty throne!

But to return to our story.

After a short time Pebbles began to make friends in his college, and before long became a popular man, because he was a useful man! Was a man wanted to make up an eleven at short notice, Bales was sure to apply to Pebbles. Was a man in the Eight or Torpid laid up for a time, who should pull in his place but Pebbles? Did the Debating Society wish to give a supper, whose rooms should they borrow but Pebbles'? And so Pebbles was popular, and hugged himself with the idea that he was liked for himself, and was therefore all the more ready to help Bales, or Featherwell, or De Bates (the President of the last-named Society) on an emergency.

So time went on, and Pebbles got through his "Little Go," as it was called then, in those happy days when (contradiction though it seem) the examinations were easier, because they were without Moderations.

Pebbles, we say, got through his "Little Go," but when he went in for his "Great Ditto," we are sorry to say that, judging from his superficial know-

ledge of all his subjects, that Panurgus had not done his duty in reading for the examination (a conjecture in which they were not far wrong) the examiners gave into the hands of the Clerk of the Schools no testamur for Mr. Pebbles of St. Mark's.

Pebbles was plucked! They call it ploughed now, but the sensations after the operation are, we believe, the same. They consist, we are told, of a kind of desire to meet the examiners in a blind alley some dark night—a conviction that they have conspired to cheat you, and a general intense disgust of everybody and everything in the world.

Pebbles was plucked! And no sooner was it whispered in Oxford, than the trades-people began to drop in for their pickings, and they were no slight ones! With his usual motley disposition, Panurgus had dabbled in all the pursuits and amusements of a University Life.

His rooms were hung with proofs-before-letters, that vied in cost (although they were, in a pictorial point of view, not very valuable) with the choice engravings of Burin, the great amateur artist of St. Mark's. His Madonnas, and Oak Crosses, and Saints, excited the envy of Reredos of Oriel; while Snaffle, of Merton, did not turn out in a better

pink or brighter boots than Pebbles, although the latter seldom did more than ride to the meet and back.

Featherwell admired Panurgus's gig, as she floated at her moorings by the barge, and he vowed she was well worth the money, much as it was, at which she was valued. De Villiers, of Ch. Ch., had not more costly furniture than our hero, whose rooms nevertheless were a consummation of bad taste. Bookstall, of Balliol, did not lay out more on his library than Pebbles, whose numerous volumes were merely costly rubbish notwithstanding. In short, as Jack-of-all-trades had he set up in Oxford, and no small sum did it cost him to purchase his stock, so that when he came to survey his position, he found himself considerably in debt, and without a testamur. In disgust and despair he took his name off the College books, and returned home.

The Squire, after a great deal of storming, paid his son's debts, remarking to his wife, "Well, Mistress Pebbles, I always said that Watts's hymns would do the boy no good—

" 'In books, and work, and healthful play,
May my first hours be past,

That I may give for every day
A good account at last.'

A good account—by Jove, ma'am—he's brought me plenty of accounts to pay for his 'books, and work, and healthful play.'

"Pebbles, my dear, you are profane!" was all the poor lady could say. To send Panurgus to College had been her pet scheme, for she wanted her son to be an accomplished gentleman. The old Squire, on the other hand, had opposed it, saying that *he* never went to College, nor his father before him, yet they made good Squires without it, and why should not Panurgus; so, that with the exception of the bills, he was not greatly vexed at our hero's failure at Oxford. But he did not live long to be either vexed or pleased at anything; for the next year Panurgus saw him laid in the family vault at Bedleigh Minster; and not long after, the mother followed him.

So Pebbles came into his property, not a little lessened by the payment of his debts, for many a patriarchal elm and many an ancient oak went into the pockets of the tradesmen in the shape of cheques and bank notes. Not a few old trees, that, standing in the Park, had seen generations of Pebbles carried

to christening, bringing home brides, borne slowly forth to burial, felt with a shudder through all their limbs and leaves and fibres, the edge of the ringing axe, and bowing, rending, falling with a sudden, sullen crash, were borne far away to do battle with the stormy seas, or to rot and crumble away in the rich black church-yard mould. But they were soon followed by more, for poor Pebbles was so full of new plans for managing his estate that, like the Irishman who spent his last half-crown to buy a purse to put it in, he sold his acres to pay for the improvements he had made in them, and what is more, sold them for less, because of those very identical so-called improvements. His tenants left him because he insisted on their planting cabbages and celery instead of potatoes—a crop, he said, that was sure to fail. His farmers gave up their farms because he meddled with their plans, and burnt the fields to improve the soil, until he converted all the land into a large desert of brick dust. But, worst of all, he had dabbled in railway speculation, and so at last came a crash, and the Jews got hold of the Pebbles property.

Then what changes took place!

The suit of armour that Sir Peregrine Pebbles had worn at Agincourt re-appeared in Fitzroy-street,

in the studio of Pœkilus Pigment, and its portrait was in the Academy, A.D. 18—, in that celebrated artist's picture of the Battle of Otterbourne, wherein it figured down in front, with Earl Percy inside it.

The old portraits of the Pebbleses of antiquity were carried away to Wardour-street whence they were removed to the suburban villa of Higgins, the retired grocer, at which place they figured as the Higginsees of antiquity.

And so the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians. Over the sea to Boulogne went Pebbles, there to consider what was next to be done. Was he fitted for any profession or trade? We fear not. Did he imagine himself fit for any. Of course he did, —there was nothing in the world that, for the short space of perhaps an hour, he did not think his special vocation. Like Shakespeare's Weaver, he wanted to be Pyramus and Thisbe, and Lion and Wall, but was only Moonshine—all Moonshine! But still he tried all; like that aristocratic weather-cock Villiers, he

“Was everything by turns, and nothing long.”

Pebbles was wandering on the beach at Boulogne, and turning over in his mind the various

modes of making a living, when some one touched him on the shoulder, and turning round, he saw a little jovial-looking parson.

“Why, Pebbles,” exclaimed Bales, for he it was, “in the dumps? What’s the matter? Stumps down, or run out, eh?” For be it known, that Bales still retained his love for the “manly game,” and he set up the boys of his village with bats, balls, and stumps, much to the delight of the farmers, who found that when the lads were better employed, they did not rob orchards or hen-houses so often. His cricket-mania had lost him the good opinion of the two Misses Hassock, for he once ventured to express his belief that in manufacturing towns and mining districts it would be a good plan to allow the men and boys a game at cricket on Saint’s Days.

In answer to Bales’ inquiry, our hero told him his story. The little ecclesiastic was touched, for he knew Pebbles’ old failing; it may be his conscience smote him for the way in which he had made Panurgus useful in the old college days. “Cheer up, old fellow,” he exclaimed, “what if you are bowled out once, you must have another innings!—and you mustn’t hit so wild,—stick to one thing, and work hard at it! don’t try to do

everything. A Jack-of-all-trades is master of none, you know ; you don't often meet with a good bat who is worth much at wicket-keeping, or a good bowler who gets the score. In the meantime, old fellow, let me have the pleasure of lending an old college-mate some of the needful !”

Pebbles seemed inclined to refuse the bank note which he offered him. “Pshaw !” he continued, “it's only a loan, you can pay me when you get a catch. By the bye, I hope you are a better hand at it than you were when you missed that splendid catch ; don't you remember—when we played the Trinity eleven ?” and so they walked on, talking of old times and companions, and before they parted Bales had promised to get our hero a tutorship in a French family. This he did, and you would fancy that Pebbles was at length settled down, at least for a time ; but no, his fate was inexorable, and so poor Panurgus at length fell a victim to it.

A year after the last mentioned event I was at Boulogne on business, when the waitress—I believe they call them “filles” in France—of a little auberge, came to request my presence at the bedside of a “compatriot.” I followed her to the inn, and then what the French call *monter'd en haut*, and there, in a miserable garret, I found

Panurgus Pebbles shivering upon a miserable pallet, evidently on the verge of death. I hurried off immediately, and called upon an eminent English physician who was staying in the place, and returned with him as soon as possible.

Too late—when we arrived, poor Pebbles was dead!

How he came to leave the French family I do not know; probably he thought he had discovered something that was exactly suited to him, as he fancied, and so threw up a good situation to grasp after a shadow. He had not been at the auberge long before he was taken seriously ill, and, poor dabbler in all things, he had consulted Dr. Vyolant Remmedie and Professor Hydrus Vasser, a disciple of Preissnitz. The latter recommended wet blankets, the former prescribed calomel; and between the two stools, as he had often done before, Pebbles fell to the ground—nay, beneath it.

He sleeps in a little churchyard near Boulogne. Featherwell and I visited the place last vacation. It was a bright summer's day, and the shade of the tower lay clearly defined across the grass, and the shadow of the weathercock seemed, as if in mockery, to rest upon poor Pebbles' grave.

“Man is but a *vane* shadow,” said Featherwell;

and so we turned away and left him to sleep under the headstone, with the simple inscription—

Hic Jacet,

PANURGUS PEBBLES.

BETTER !

BETTER to die on the Battle Plain—
To die for our native land,
Then to live until Time on our youthful prime
Hath laid his long, bony hand.

Better to die when we think that One
Will weep and lament our falling,
Than to live till she prove untrue to her Love,
And the Past is beyond recalling.

Better to die on the Battle Plain,
And fall in the arms of Glory,
Than to live till each breath is a painful death,
And our Love but an idle story !

DON RODERICK.

AFTER the battle of Guadalete, which decided the fate of the Goths in Spain, the body of Don Roderick was not discovered, and for a long time after the Spanish peasants believed that he would some day reappear to assist them in expelling the Moors.

I.

Lay the sword beneath the hearth,
And lay the spear beside,
And cover them with stones and earth,
For, weal or woe betide,
We wait Don Roderick's return,
When Freedom's beacon fires shall burn!

II.

Hide the corslet n'eath the roof,
The shield within the wall;

The moment is not far aloof
When we shall need them all—
When all the vine-clad hills of Spain
Shall echo to our shouts again !

III.

Lay the greaves beneath the sod,
Hide all your arms away ;
And earnestly beseech our God
To hasten on the day,
When far and wide our shout shall ring—
“ For Spain—Saint Iago—and the King ! ”

DIE HERZ-BLUME.

THERE grew a little flower once,
That blossomed in a day,
And some said it would ever bloom,
And some 'twould fade away,
And some said it was Happiness,
And some said it was Spring,
And some said it was Grief and Tears,
And many such a thing;
But still the little flower bloomed,
And still it lived and throve.—
And men do call it "Summer-growth,"
But the angels call it "Love!"

TO WILL-O'-THE-WISP.



I.

VER the marish, and over the bog,
Over the pools, where arises the fog,
Lamp of the leeches and fire of the frog!
Why did you lead me astray?

Why did you gleam like a beaoning light,
Flickering out in the gloom of the night?
I was quite sure you were leading me right,
When I turned out of the way.

II.

Faithless, and fickle, and treacherous lamp,
Why did I follow you into the swamp,
Where the soft ground was so slimy and damp,
And the long rushes so crisp?
Wet, worn, and weary I homeward have sped,
And find, on undressing and going to bed,
A leech in each boot, and a cold in my head!
Treacherous Will-o'-the-Wisp!

THE CAVALIER AND THE PURITAN.

CHAPTER I.

IN the days of King James the Second, there lived at Burnley Manor "a right loyal gentleman," as he was called at that period. His ancestors, from time immemorial, had lived in the old house. I need not go through the long pedigree, to show how one of the "Burnleighs of Burnleigh" had been to the Holy Land (was not his long red-cross shield hanging up in the old hall?) or how one of them sailed with Sir Walter Raleigh, or how, in later years, Geoffrey Burnley was killed at the battle of Naseby—that fatal fight, when so many noble English families perished. Burnley's son, concealed by the friendship of a Puritan called Crane, who

lived at Burnley, had returned to his estates at the time of the Restoration, and, in turn, extended his protection to Crane's son, who was nearly suffering imprisonment. One would have thought that such mutual kindness would have bound their descendants together for ever; but, as will be seen hereafter, avarice stepped in, and broke up a friendship that promised to be so lasting.

The Burnley we last mentioned married a lady of good family, who bore him one son. While the merry-making and carousing were going on at the Manor House for the birth of the heir, the wife of the rescued Crane died in giving birth to a male child. The two infants thus ushered into the world on the same day, and almost at the same hour, seemed as if born to be playmates and friends—a still stronger tie between the two families—but fate had destined them to play a different part in the great drama of life. Young Cyril Burnley and Roger Crane went to the same school, where the latter soon outstripped his school-mate, not less in learning than in intelligence, for Cyril was an easy, quiet lad, not remarkable for shrewdness. His friends called him a "good-natured fellow," that being the euphuism for the epithet "fool," accorded him by his enemies; while Roger, far from being a

“fool,” inclined a little more to the “knave.” After spending some time at school, the two youths went to Oxford, where Cyril entered at Christ Church, while Roger obtained a scholarship at the neighbouring Hall of Broadgates, which some time before had been raised to the dignity of a college. Here he progressed rapidly, and after leaving college, became a studious Templar.

Cyril led a jolly life at Oxford, but was at length expelled by the college authorities for some irregularity—I believe for a dispute with a Puritan Doctor of Divinity, which ended in his flooring the worthy divine—after which exploit he retired to his native village, and, his father being dead, began the life of a country squire. About the same time Crane, having arrived at the dignity of a “Counsellor,” came down to Burnley, and from that period our history commences.

Discords and dissensions soon began, and King James was driven from his throne, and in the struggles and troubles that followed, Cyril was suspected of assisting the celebrated Dundee. Certain it is that he raised a small body of men, and disappeared from the neighbourhood, only reappearing some time after the fatal battle of Killiecrankie, when, with the shattered remnants of

his followers, he returned to Burnley; but the few who went with him on that secret expedition were tried, and faithful, and kept their own counsel, so that, in spite of the lectures and cross-questionings of their respective wives, the truth was never elicited, and, though dangerously compromised, Cyril escaped unpunished.

But his heart was with King James, and not to be behind his ancestors in loyalty, he determined not to take the oath of fealty to the usurper, as he invariably called William of Orange.

He was not a man of great moral courage, so he laid a plan by which he might escape an open refusal, and yet satisfy his conscience—he was sensible enough to see that open resistance was useless, and there was no hope left for James.

In the year 1688, then, or the year following Cyril, while in London, fell in with William Penn, the well-known Quaker. Penn about this time was suffering for his close friendship with the exiled King. Four several times was he carried before King William in council, and accused of being in secret correspondence with James. His own people cried out against him as a Romanist, nay, as a Jesuit in disguise—and numerous rumours of the most horrible description were circulated about him.

Cyril was irresistibly attracted towards him by his real goodness and sterling worth, which all the calumnies of the world could not destroy. He communicated his difficulties, and Penn advised him, rather unwisely, perhaps, to start for the new colony on the banks of the Delaware. After talking it over, Cyril returned to Burnley, and sent down early on the morning after his arrival to beg Roger Crane to come up, as he had important business to communicate to him.

A close friendship still existed between the two, although the Puritan seldom visited the Manor House, for the jolly life of the Cavalier, and his revelries and merry-makings, were hardly suited to his taste.

We will take a look at Cyril while he is waiting for Crane in the little library, for, although the former thought it necessary to have a library, seeing that he had been a magistrate and justice of the peace under King James, he adorned the walls with only just enough books to give it a right to that title; and of those books most were works of no very justiciary weight—Philip Sydney's "Arcadia," "The Faerie Queene," a mighty collection of jovial Cavalier song-books, with a scanty, very scanty, sprinkling of sermons, most of them being upon

the King's Supremacy. Cyril had now grown a fine man, just in the prime of life; his long dark hair hung in curls upon his shoulders, for he despised the idea of a wig; his moustache had in it a slight tinge of auburn, that contrasted well with his black love-locks. His face was marked—not disfigured—by a scarcely-healed scar that he had brought back with him from the mysterious expedition we have mentioned. He was tall, and straight, though his stout, well-formed limbs took away slightly from his height.

Very different was the figure that now entered the room. Roger Crane, although of the same age as Cyril, seemed twenty years his senior. His figure was bowed with long study, and deep furrows and lines, arising from the same cause, did not add beauty to a face that in itself was not pleasant. His hair was already grizzled, and his figure was lean and spare. At his knee toddled a little girl of about five years of age—his daughter—for Roger was married, and though folks said he was a cruel husband, and a hard lawyer, it would have been difficult to have found a more kind and loving father.

Putting the child on a chair, whence she could look out of the window down a long avenue of

elms, where the little grey rabbits kept darting about from among the ferns on either side of the drive, Roger seated himself in an arm-chair, and waited for Cyril to speak.

Cyril was striding up and down with a sort of desperate air, whistling the tune of one of his favourite songs, the first verse of which ran as follows :—

“The stars were winking in the sky,
And the moon went dancing along,
When we fell on the Roundhead rebel's camp,
Full fifteen hundred strong!
Come carol us a carol oh !*
The Roundheads to the devil go,
And God save our good King !”

Suddenly recollecting that perhaps Crane might not relish the ditty, he stopped short, threw himself into a chair, and filling a glass of claret, tossed it off, and began business.

“ Roger, old friend, I've made up my mind to leave the old country. Odds fish, man ! do you think that after swearing fealty to our good King James—whom God restore to his throne say I—

* The inscriptions on the coins of Charles the Second,
“ Carolus a Carolo.”

I can turn about, weather-cock fashion, and bow down to a fat Dutch herring? Pshaw!" he continued, as he saw that Crane was about to protest against this abuse of William of Orange; "I do not often run a-tilt at your prejudices, but I must have my say out now, and you must e'en bear with me this once, for you may never see me again. While I was staying in London, I fell in with the worthy Penn, and have made up my mind to set out for the settlement, that he has named after him—Pennsylvania. Now seeing, Roger, that I have neither chit nor child, I bethought me of the old friendship of our families; and, albeit, since we left Oxford you have seldom come up here, still I have much friendship for my old college friend, and respect your scruples, though, odd's life! I cannot see iniquity in cracking a joke or a bottle of claret, or sin in singing a roaring song. But let that pass, old friend, we have all our hobbies. So now to tell you why I required to see you. Seeing, as I have said, that I have no children, I have determined to leave my estates in your hands, if you will undertake the charge, until I either settle down in the new country, as is most probable, or return to England. I will not insult you, old friend, by offering to pay you as a steward,

but do you live on the income of the property as it falls in. Bring up your wife and youngster, and live here. By my soul! the old house wants some piety to air it, for it has been the scene of roystering and mirth these many long years. Well, what say you, Roger? Will you undertake the trouble on these conditions?"

"In sooth, Cyril Burnley," answered Roger, "sith you wish it to be—though I like not the thought of being an hireling."

"Pish, man," interrupted the Cavalier; "I do not ask you to do so, but I had rather an old friend lived in my father's house, than a stranger or a steward, who would defraud me of the moneys that I offer you as a gift. So no more words to the bargain. If you will get ready your chattels, the house shall be vacant to-morrow at sunset."

So saying, Cyril shook Crane by the hand, who, seeing that the other seemed to wish to say no more on the subject, did not oppose him longer. The Cavalier, having called together his servants, told them that he was about to set out for a far country, and amply paid them their wages, thanking them for their good services. There was many a moist eye among them, for rough and hot-headed

though he was, there never breathed a kinder or better master. So the domestics packed up their baggage, and departed to their homes.

The next day Cyril and the Counsellor were walking up and down the avenue in deep conversation. Cyril now spoke more freely, and, the first plunge taken, seemed able to think and act more freely.

"There is much to be feared, mind you," said Roger; "'tis marvellous unhealthy, this same America, they tell me, where there be numbers of savage beasts, besides savage men, of which there be tribes, and exceeding fierce, too, for did they not kill my worthy uncle Joash Wax-confident-in-bonds, who went forth among them to preach the Gospel?"

"A man must die somewhere, and at some time," said Cyril, "and the bare idea of danger gives a smack to life, like the lemons in a rousing bowl of punch; besides, too, if I like it not, I shall return, and if aught brings me back, why, I shall know where to find you, and will relieve you of the cares of the stewardship."

"But you may never return, Cyril Burnley."

"Well, if I do not, then you may have the lands, and welcome, for of all the world I shall then want

barely six feet of earth, and I may not want even that if I be eaten by the savages, who, they tell me, be mighty eaters of human flesh."

So, with a laugh, Cyril strapped the little valise (containing the money he intended to take with him) to the saddle-bow of his horse, which was just led out from the stable. Flinging himself on its back, he shook Roger warmly by the hand, and rode off at full speed, followed by a servant leading the horse that bore the rest of his baggage.

Cyril did not turn back for a last glance—he could not trust himself to look again on his ancestral home. If he had turned he would have seen little, for in spite of his forced gaiety, there was a dimness before his eyes that might almost have been called tears.

Without any adventure, Cyril reached London, and there embarked on board the 'John Key,' a ship called after the first child born at the settlement of Philadelphia, who died, in 1767, an old man of eighty-five, having gone all his life by the name of First Born.

After a long and tedious voyage, the vessel at length reached the Delaware, and sailing up, dropped anchor off the rising colony of Philadel-

phia. Here Cyril landed, and here we will leave him.

The old Puritan settled down at Burnley Manor, and brought his child to dwell there—and the house became so familiar to him, that he looked upon it as his own, and forgot all about Cyril Burnley.

CHAPTER II.

YEARS passed by, and Roger, perhaps too readily believing Cyril to be dead, began to act as Lord of the Manor, altering and improving, selling, buying and exchanging at his own pleasure. While this was going on, poor Penn had been brought into disgrace by the false accusations of Fuller, and after years of neglect was only just reinstated in the King's favour and restored to his government. In the meantime, Cyril had found out how sadly he erred in coming to the settlement. He had bought a farm, which he did not know how to manage, and which, after a struggle of many long years, he was obliged to give up, broken in health and fortunes.

During the first year after his arrival at Phil-

adelphia, he began to discover that the customs of the rigidly simple and often fanatic inhabitants—for the most part men who for religious reasons had sought a new home—were little calculated to suit a roystering Cavalier; so after vainly seeking for companions after his own heart, he took unto himself a wife, the daughter of a worthy old Dutchman, who parted with her for the slight consideration of a hogshead of tobacco. She, however, did not survive these nuptials many years.

For some time before her death the farm had been going fast to rack, so at last the Cavalier, with a sigh, turned his back upon the settlement, and set out with an only son for England.

Few would have recognised in him the fine hearty man who came there from the old world. Indeed, one or two of the inhabitants confided as much to each other, as they watched him going off in the ship, as the vessel unfolded her white wings, and rounded the woody Cape. Poor Cyril! his hair was grey, and, in contrast to his face, tanned by exposure to the sun, seemed almost white. His limbs were shrunk and wasted, and he had lost his former erect carriage in a fever through which the homely, affectionate little Dutchwoman had nursed him with unceasing care.

When he reached London, Cyril left his little son in the care of the innkeeper's wife, and travelled with all speed to Burnley. It was a hot summer's day, and Roger Crane was seated at the open library window, watching his two girls tending the flowers on the lawn; for the ferns on either side of the avenue were gone, and with them the timid rabbits that used to flit among them. It was now a trim lawn, dotted over with quaintly-shaped beds filled with gorgeous flowers.

Suddenly a figure sprang in at the window, and before Crane could distinguish who it was, his hand was seized in a firm grasp, and a voice that he knew only too well, altered though it was, exclaimed :

“ God bless you, Roger ! God bless you ! it is a comfort to see an old well-known face again. Odslife, but you're little changed with all these long years. Art tired of the stewardship ? I have come to relieve you, for I have lost every farthing I had in that infernal old psalm-singing settlement, so I have come back to end my days in peace in the home of my childhood. But you shall not budge, man, there's room enough for us all, and your wife must be a mother to my boy, for I've been married,

old friend, since I saw you last," and here his voice began to falter; "poor heart, she was a good woman, God bless her. But by my soul, Roger!" he exclaimed, observing the cold look of astonishment with which Crane regarded him, "don't you remember me? Cyril, Cyril Burnley! your old friend! surely you've not forgotten?"

"In good sooth, no, my good man," said Crane, "I cannot have forgotten you in that I never knew you: and let me tell you that if you think to act Cyril Burnley, you will not find me very ready of belief."

Burnley stood aghast. At first he thought Crane was joking, but there was that in his tone which showed him to be in earnest. At length he found words to speak.

"Roger Crane, for Heaven's sake don't jest with me!"

"Jest! sirrah! I advise you to beware how you carry your jest farther. If you do not get hence I will soon make you."

The truth began to dawn upon Cyril; he pressed him again and again, until at length Crane exclaimed—

"You must produce your papers. Doubtless

you will find many living who will recognise in you the fine, hearty, roystering Burnley, of Burnley."

"Heartless wretch!" exclaimed Cyril. "Now I can see your cold-blooded villainy; you know as God is judge between us, that I trusted my lands to you, as I would to my mother's son. I know that, friendless and penniless as I am, I have no hope left. You may rob the son of your father's preserver of his birthright, but mark me, your ill-got riches shall not prosper you!"

He was gone; but before his shadow had passed from the room, Roger Crane had fallen senseless to the ground: whether it was the excitement or the terror of that interview, or whether it was a direct punishment from Heaven, no one can tell; but from that hour one half of his body, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, was dead — paralyzed.

Cyril went to London, and, embarking with his young son, he sought a home in Holland among his wife's kindred; and it was there on his death-bed, some years after, that he imparted to his son the facts that our readers are already acquainted with.

This son, Hugh, grew up into a fine youth, and

obtained a commission in one of the Dutch regiments, where he passed by the name of Börnhagh. The thought struck him that in Captain Börnhagh, the young Dutch officer, few people would recognise the son of Cyril Burnley, of Burnley; so with all the romance of youth he determined to visit the place that should have been his own, and try to recover the estates which his father, worn out by long troubles and age, had too easily despaired of recovering.

For a long time after Cyril's departure, Crane had been fearful lest he should strive to recover his estates, or perhaps, attempt to take personal vengeance. Conscience was not still, and the worm that never dies was not asleep, and the old man, as he went trailing one half of his body a dead weight about with him, would often curse himself and his fate, and long for death to remove him from his sufferings.

His only delight was in his daughters; the younger, a fair, delicate-looking girl, quiet and meek, yet, as she proved afterwards, not without a little of her father's determined spirit, when roused. The elder was a dark beauty, but her features bore an unpleasant resemblance to her father, as, indeed, did her character, for she was

proud, and fierce, and unflinching, and if she was not wicked like him, it was only because she had had no opportunity of being so. As time wore on, blindness was added to old Crane's other afflictions, and then his daughters became his only solace. They read to him, sang to him, and played to him, and became so necessary to his existence that the selfish old man would hardly suffer them to go out of his hearing, and drove away, by increasing churlishness, the suitors who had come to seek them in marriage.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Hugh Börnhagh arrived at Burnley, he took up his quarters at the village inn—the “Cup and Capon,” as the signboard gave out—and having ordered a good bowl of punch, he cleverly opened the campaign by inviting his host to partake of it with him. Hugh was sufficiently well versed in the tricks of the mess-table to ply his host, without seeming to hang back himself, and, at length, when the genial liquor began to take effect, and the victim became talkative and communicative, he led him round to the subject of the Counsellor, and got out of him all the information he had to impart.

Mine host’s opinion of Crane was perhaps less

complimentary, though assuredly not less candid than it would have been, had he not seen so deep into the punchbowl. After informing Hugh that the Counsellor was "just the queerest old fish that ever snored a psalm"—for the jolly host was at heart a real foe to the Roundheads, like all other good fellows—he assured him that his daughters were "as pretty lasses as you might see within fifty miles;" that the old fellow was a great worshipper of King William the Third; and that he drove away all the "goodly youths that went a courting the two sisters by his crabbed, ungainly ways."

This and a thousand other things the host told his guest, though somewhat indistinctly occasionally. Hugh sat up late that night, revolving plans of attack: first one, and then another was adopted and thrown aside, until he fixed upon one that pleased him. The next morning Crane was called out to meet a visitor, and leaning on the arm of Liliás, his youngest daughter, he crawled into his consultation room. As they entered, the stranger made a low bow to Liliás, in which his eyes certainly did their best to let her understand the impression she had made upon him; nor did they fail, if we are to believe the little fluttering blush

that her cheeks hung out as an answering signal, as she left the room after returning Hugh's greeting with no small trepidation.

As soon as she was gone, Hugh announced himself as "Captain Börnhagh." At the sound of his voice the old man leant eagerly forward in his chair, his bony hands grasping the arms tightly, and his eye-balls glaring terribly. "Speak again," he murmured, trembling, "surely my ears deceive me. Quick! speak! I think I know that voice!" Hugh repeated his name more clearly, adding the reason of his visit—an imaginary case of some intricacy. The old man grew calm, giving his advice here and there, as the narration proceeded, with great shrewdness.

Hugh managed very cleverly in the course of conversation to let fall, as if by accident, that he was a Dutchman, and a favoured protégé of the King's. Crane took the bait readily, became very civil, and taking great interest in his case, invited the young man to partake of some refreshment. In a word, Hugh had opened the campaign successfully, and from that day became a frequent visitor.

He followed up the advantages he had obtained, and in no long time made himself master of Liliás'

heart. It was not until they had made their mutual confession of love that the lovers began to think how their attachment could be brought to a happy issue.

Taking the Counsellor aside one evening, Hugh said, "My good Sir, I'll give twenty gold pieces to the man who will solve for me a knotty point that entirely baffles my sagacity. Will you assist me in unravelling it?"

"Gold pieces are not so plenty now-a-days," said Crane, "that I should think of refusing twenty of them for advice that it may not take me as many minutes to give."

"Well then, Sir, the case is this:—Before I came here I was attached to a young lady of good family; in fact, Sir, as far as ourselves were concerned, we were betrothed. I applied to her relatives for consent. I have just received their refusal, and from what I can judge, and knowing them to be Jacobites, I fear that the King's favour, instead of assisting me, is the cause of my rejection. The first idea that presented itself to me was to carry her off, but prudence reminded me that the young lady was not of age; in this perplexity, therefore, I thought that perhaps your great skill might assist me."

"The thing's plain and easy enough," said the Counsellor, "get the young lady to carry *you* off!"

"How do you mean?" inquired Hugh.

"Why, simply thus—Get your horse ready, strap a pillion on in front. Let the young lady mount first, and give you her hand to assist you to mount behind her. This done, nothing remains but for her to ply whip and spur and carry you off; and I defy all the judges in the world to lay a finger on you."

"Odslife, a most excellent plan!" cried Hugh, laughing more at the idea of old Crane's outwitting himself than anything else; so he paid the twenty pieces without grudge, and bade the Counsellor "good night."

When he left the house, instead of going down the avenue, he turned to the left, and keeping in the shadow of the house, crept round quietly to the back. The watch-dog came out of the kennel and shook and stretched himself, but after reconnoitring, turned round and coiled himself up to sleep again; so it seems that it was not the first time that Master Hugh had stopped under the little casement, at which he now tapped lightly with a long slender willow wand. At the first tap the window opened,

and Liliás appeared, to whom he explained the advice he had received.

To Liliás' credit be it said, that it was not until after considerable persuasion, and when she saw that there was no other way left, that she consented to fly with Hugh; but her scruples once overcome, she was ready to adopt any plan he might suggest.

The next night found Hugh at the same place, but this time, instead of a willow wand, it was a ladder that he drew out from among the shrubs.

Liliás opened the window, and stepping lightly down the ladder, found herself in her lover's arms. After wasting a few precious moments in joyful whispers and kisses that were, perhaps, too loud to be discreet, she mounted the horse, which was waiting at the end of the avenue, and went through the farce of assisting Hugh to mount behind her; for truth to tell, the only use he made of the hand she offered him was to press it to his lips as he bounded lightly to his seat.

Before the next morning they were many miles away; and almost as soon as he discovered the loss of his daughter, old Crane received a note

which Hugh had left for him at his inn, wherein he thanked the old lawyer for his excellent advice, "which," as the letter said, "he would see, was not thrown away."

CHAPTER IV.

It would be folly to attempt to describe the Counsellor's rage when he saw how he had been outwitted. For several days he was so savage and surly that even his eldest daughter did not dare go near him. After a time, however, he grew calmer, and would even sometimes speak of Lilius, but he never uttered a word about Hugh. But from the hour she left him, he began to break up rapidly, and before the year was quite out he was seized with a violent attack, which laid him on a sick bed, and his life was then despaired of. For a long time he lay raving and delirious, and from his lips Bridget gleaned, during his paroxysms, the tale of crime which is already known to the reader. When, as he drew near his end, he became calmer

and more sensible, she questioned him about it, and he told her all.

At the first announcement of his illness, his son-in-law hurried to the house, but no sooner had Hugh crossed the threshold than, with a loud yell, he sat upright in the bed, stretching out his arms as if to keep him off, screaming, "Cyril! Cyril Burnley! Spectre or devil—avaunt! Bridget, my child! protect me! drive him hence! Oh, Heaven! mercy! mercy!"

He sunk back, his eyes closed, and in a moment he was motionless—dead!

Hugh came up to the bedside, and looked the dead man in the face, and said, turning to Bridget, "It is too true—you see in me the son of Cyril Burnley, the man whom your father robbed of his birthright. I did not think to witness such a terrible scene. Heaven have mercy on his soul;" and with a shudder he turned away, and, mounting his horse, set out homeward.

Gently he broke to his wife the news of her father's death, and the story of his wrongs. Poor Lilius! She had loved her father dearly, selfish and stern though he was, and it was a sad blow to her to know that he was guilty of so heartless a crime.

After a time, she recovered her health and spirits, and her husband established his claim to the estates by an arrangement with the elder sister, who was at first very loth to give up the property, but at last consented when she found she had no means of proving her father's title. In their new home Hugh and his loving little wife lived long and happily together.

THE BIRTHDAY.

ON a bonny, bonny morn
My sweet Ladie She was born !
On the first day of the Spring,
When the birds were mustering,
Warbling forth a thousand loves
In the emerald-budded groves !

Sweetest morn of all the years,
Half in sunshine, half in tears,
From the East it came up blushing ;
Like a maiden's cheek in flushing
All bedewed with joyful tears
For the love-tale that she hears.
So arose the bonny morn
When my Ladie fair was born !

When they knew the Spring arrived
All the pretty flowers revived ;

And the fairest Earth did bring
As an offering to Spring.
But of all those gems of Earth
None was there enough of worth
For sweet Spring on that bright morn,
When my Ladie fair was born.

Then to Spring in all her charms
Nature came, and in her arms
Bore my little Ladie fair,
As a flower beyond compare ;
Then, as in her arms She lay,
Did sweet Spring to Nature say—
“ Thou hast brought the fairest flower
To adorn my first bright hour,
Crowning all the gifts of Earth
By this little blossom's birth !
In Her cheek I see the blush
Of the first Spring-morning flush ;
In Her eyes I see the light
Of the first Spring-morning bright ;
And Her voice shall be as sweet
As the wild birds' songs that greet
My approach with early lays,
Musical with love and praise.
And Her locks shall be the night
That Spring-morning puts to flight !”

Thus is She th' embodying
Of the Year-Queen—Beauteous Spring !

And because Earth could not bring
Any offering worthy Spring,
On that bonny, bonny morn
My fair Ladie She was born ;
And the morning wept above Her
As a mother that did love Her.
(For the joy that most endears
All our life is told by tears—
Told by speech, or told by glance,
But most in tears finds utterance.)

Thus upon that bonny morn
My sweet Ladie She was born.

THE SONG OF STEAM.

PILE the fire !—Heap it high !—Let the red embers glow !
Hurl in fuel full fast to the furnace below !
Who knows not my power ? Though, in truth, I may seem
But feeble ; who knows not the power of Steam ?
On the land, on the sea, who is stronger than I ?
Through the fields, by the towns, o'er the rivers I fly
As swift as a bird, with a whirr and a scream,
Shouting out “ I am Power ! I am Might ! I am Steam ! ”

In the bowels of Earth, where the daylight comes dim
Through the long miles of tunnel so gloomy and grim,
Like a dragon I speed with my fierce-glaring eyes,
Earth trembling around me in fear and surprise !

And at night, when 'tis dark, like the stars in the sky,
Along the embankments my flashing lamps fly ;
As I hurry along in the gloom of the night
With a scream, and a gleam, and a flash of red light

And, while brightly the fires of my triumphing, beam,
I shout "I am Power! I am Might! I am Steam!"

In the thick-peopled town, where the tall chimneys rise
And roll forth their clouds of black smoke to the skies,
Unceasing, unyielding, unwearying still,
I toil at the lathe—at the loom—at the mill!

Turns the wheel!—Moves the beam!—Fly round quickly the
bands!
And swift grows the wonderful web 'neath my hands!
Though the silk may be fine, though the thread may be
weak.
At the touch of the Giant no fibre shall break!

Fly round swiftly the bands!—Moves the beam!—Turns the
wheel!
And subdued by my power is the cold, stubborn steel!
Though the metal be hard and unbending—'tis nought;—
By the hand of the Giant 'tis polished and wrought!

Fly round swiftly the bands!—Turns the wheel!—Moves the
beam!
And the mill slow revolves at the magic of Steam!
Oh, though weighty and huge be the stone of the mill,
Yet the hand of the Giant can move it at will!

The shrill-screeching saw by my power is driven,
And the strong heart of Oak through its centre is riven;

Nor cleave the sharp teeth through stout timber alone,
But through metal and marble—through iron and stone.

They feed me with rags—with the tatters and shreds—
The slough of foul patches—that Poverty sheds ;
And behold ! as the fly from its chrysalis springs
In the pride and the beauty of soft downy wings,
By the might of my magic, revealed to the sight,
The rags—rags no longer—are paper snow-white !
And while swiftly I ply wheel and rod, crank and beam,
I shout “ I am Power ! I am Might ! I am Steam ! ”

Yet not in the town all my labours are done,
But where far-stretching meadows are bright in the sun,
Where the woodlands are green with the whispering leaves,
And the corn-lands are loaded with bright golden sheaves.
There—afar o'er the fields, rich with ripe, rustling grain—
The hum of my voice sounds distinctly and plain,
As I sing to myself o'er the work that I ply,
And the chaff by my pinions is wafted on high ;
While I busily fan, till my task is complete,
From the useful the worthless—the husk from the wheat !
And by Nature's fresh loveliness round him o'ercome,
The voice of the Giant falls lower—grows dumb—
And, as drowsy with joy he sinks down in a dream,
Murmurs low “ I am Power ! I am Might ! I am Steam ! ”

Where Man the Earth's deep-hidden caverns explores,
And digs from its centre the wonderful ores,

From the gold that shall glisten with gems in a crown,
To the lead that shall coffin the bones of a clown !
At the mouth of the pit—at the shaft of the mine,
Where all the day long they can see the stars shine,
Across the abyss stand I, firm in my might,
And bring the rare treasures of ore to the light,
From the veins of the Great Mother—Earth—where of old
Ran the current of bright, precious blood, they call gold !
Earth—whose sinews are iron and copper and lead ;
In whose bosom Man lays the belovèd ones dead ;
Earth who rears Man himself—brings him up at her breast,
Who folds her arms round him, and soothes him to rest ;—
From the deep-hidden caverns, where crystal and spar
Through the gloom of the mine glimmer forth like a star,
I bring the rich treasures of ore to the day :
And they smelt them, and weld them, and bear them away ;
And each metal goes forth on its mission laid down,
As the spade or the blade—as the coin or the crown.
While beside the abyss stand I—ever supreme—
Shouting out “ I am Power ! I am Might ! I am Steam ! ”

On the far-distant seas, through the storm and the spray,
Unflinching, swift-darting, I speed on my way ;
With a pulse that ne'er stops, and with fins that ne'er tire,
A Leviathan filled with a soul, that is Fire !
Wind and Tide strive in vain—I cleave sternly as Death
Through the tempest above and the wild waves beneath ;
And the long trailing smoke floats away o'er the main,
As I lash the dark waters to foam in disdain ;

And the waves in the night-time seem blushing blood-red,
Reflecting the lurid light hanging o'erhead.
And the sea-monsters gaze—too majestic to fly—
With their great fearful eyes, as I hurry me by;
And the wild birds of Ocean wheel round me and scream;
As I shout "I am Power! I am Might! I am Steam!"

But not in the fields, by the mine, on the main,
In the loom, or the mill, or the swift-speeding train,
Is the wonderful work—yea, the mightiest one—
Of the Giant of Good—of the Steam Monarch done!

Pile the fire!—Heap it high!—Let the red embers glow!
Hurl in fuel full fast to the furnace below!
Let the wheels fly round fast!—Let the bands quickly run!
For my mightiest deed yet remains to be done;
And while swiftly I ply wheel and band, rod and beam,
I shout "I am Power! I am Might! I am Steam!"

I hunger! Before me for food let them throw
The broad sheets of paper, as spotless as snow.
Turns the wheel! Moves the crank! Roll the cylinders
slow!
And the sheets, one by one, disappear down below!

Roll the cylinders slow! Turns the wheel! Moves the
crank!
And the paper comes forth—but no longer a blank!
And the mightiest deed of the Steam Giant's done,
And forth on the wide world the volume has gone,

Impress'd with high thoughts that shall live through all time
With the words of the bards or the sages sublime;
And the people of Earth, hail the volume and bless
The Giant whose mightiest work is the Press.

Pile the fire! Heap it high! Let the red embers glow!
Hurl in fuel full fast to the furnace below!
Through the long coming ages, unchanged will I stand,
Striving long, striving strong, through the breadth of the
land,

Never ceasing the toil, that of yore I began
For the glory of God—for the welfare of Man!

Pile the fire! Heap it high! Let the red embers gleam
"I am Strength! I am Power! I am Might! I am Steam!"

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE.

“A House—but under some prodigious ban
Of excommunication!”

As the Committee of the above mentioned establishment, as well as Mr. Ruskin and Mrs. Merrifield, with a host of others, are all giving forth essays and laying down rules, each according to his or her particular fancy, we cannot see why we should not have a hand in the matter too, and start our School of Design, and publish our ideas of true taste.

In some points, we agree with the various authorities we have quoted. Do not try to make things look what they are not—let a chair be a chair, a table a table. (We remember one in the

Exhibition formed by the shield of a gladiator, who knelt with a drawn sword underneath—an inhospitable board—a new plan for *cutting* disagreeable acquaintances.)

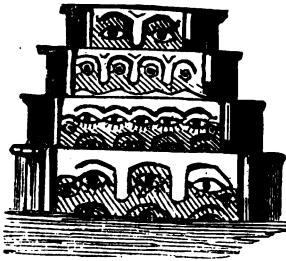
No, we say, let everything seem what it is. Do not have your ink-stand shaped like a wolf's head with a moveable brain-pan, or (though it does please your anti-Russian ideas) a bear with his throat cut, and a hinge instead of a vertebra. We repeat, this is false taste ; let your ink-stand be an inkstand, or, at least, as *ink-standish* as possible. Let your mantel-piece be a mantel-piece ; do not Gingham and Grodynaples advertise their mantle-pieces in *the best taste* at one guinea ? Let your sofa be a sofa in *so far* as may be.

Our natural modesty prevents us from asserting that the new receptacles for letters in the City were first suggested by us ; being in accordance with our theory, *post-boxes* and nothing but it. Our modesty, we repeat, prevents us from asserting this, but let the public insinuate as much, we shall not deny the imputation.

We will now explain, by a few designs, what our canons are.

We agree with the Marlborough House Com-

mittee that we should not have cabbage-roses and scrolls meandering over carpets ; but we do not see that the Turkish patterns and conventional forms



are any better than the things complained of. Look at our design—it conveys to the spectator immediately the purpose for which it is intended. It *is* a *stare*-carpet, and no mistake!

Suppose a youth fresh from the country—but newly transplanted from his native rural scenes—in a word, picture a Corydon in Cavendish Street, a Battus in Belgravia, or a Melibœus in Mayfair. Imagine him standing in a gorgeous drawing-room, resplendent with the gaudy knick-knacks of the prevailing false taste. If he were requested to take a seat on the Ottoman, would he—unacquainted as he is with the adjuncts of fashionable life—know what article of furniture was meant? He would gaze round the room, bewildered, hopeless ; there is not the least chance of his guessing that the square seat, with a tassel at each corner, and a bird of Paradise on the seat, is the required

article. But supposing our design were worked out : at the first glance—connected as it is with the late war—he would recognise the Ottoman, and bring himself to an anchor at the wished for *Porte*.



Thousands of our commonest household furniture may, by our rules, be made significant of their respective uses. The specimen here given of what Horace calls "*aspera militiæ*"—the Militia roughs—immediately points out its use as a *muster'd* spoon!



What can more plainly, and, at the same time, more touchingly explain its purpose than the "half-blind" we give in the margin. The

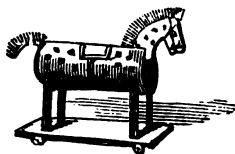


combined genius of all the designers in the world

could not, it is our humble opinion, produce anything better adapted for the purpose.

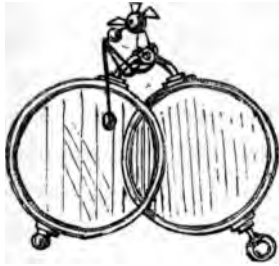
In one of our designs, we have taken the “conventional forms” doctrine as a guide. The favourite rule of the “Tasters General” we have mentioned. How they reconcile this with paintings and engravings, we cannot say—perhaps they don’t—so that, some day, we may hope to see at the Royal Academy the conventional form of a Man in the Portrait of a Gentleman, so seldom left out in the Catalogue of Works of Art exhibited there.

However, to return to our subject. We give a design for a towel-horse, in the conventional form of that quadruped—the back being slightly lengthened—(an allowed license in conventionalities), in order to accommodate the towels. We would suggest that the animal should be painted a bright blue, picked out with red spots; but, of course, if the furniture of the apartment were different, the article would be tinted otherwise—green and buff, &c.



We should be very grateful if any one could show us a design for a *peer-glass* frame that more

clearly shows its object than the one we give. One



can see, without the need of a moment's reflection, the purpose for which it is designed. We suggest, too, the insertion of the reflective power—in the shape of a mirror—into the head of the

towel-horse, which would thus become a cheval-glass as well.

But, joking apart, what is the necessity for the great cry that is being raised against the taste that has prevailed for years?

The man who labours in the crowded city, and who, though he loves, possesses no garden, may not he adorn his walls with paper that is trellised with roses? If not, how shall he remember the beauty of the green fields, sighing—

“Oh, but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet,
With the sky above my head
And the grass beneath my feet!”

Will your conventional form of a rose—(some-

thing like the architectural ones of the Tudors, I take it, resembling an open artichoke—and even that sat upon and flattened—more than anything I know,) will that satisfy him? will it remind him even of the humblest dog-rose?

If the light of the window falsifies the lights and shadows of the paper, is there no mental shadow that that cheerful trellis of flowers drives away? Why, it reminds him of his children, with whom it is a pet-paper, whence they pick fancied nosegays, and whose bright-hued birds they feed with imaginary dainties.

Let us each enjoy our own choice; do not taboo and anathemize so cruelly. Shall I cut Battles, my old friend and fellow clerk, because, in the little villa at Hornsey which he has fitted up for Mrs. B—— that is to *be*, the paper is an ever-recurring shepherd and ditto-ess sitting under an arch of trees surrounded by three sheep (though *they*, for the matter of that, are conventional, and unlike Nature enough to satisfy even Marlborough House)? Shall I never again set my foot within Smithers's door, because, if I do, I must tread upon scrolls and festoons, which ought to be unpleasant walking? For my part, I never feel uncomfortable when walking on them—

I do not feel as if I were risking my neck among the inequalities of the flourishes; I suppose it is that my eye is not that of an artist. Well, "where Ignorance—" say I!

Why do you cry out against imitations? When loved ones leave us, we have their likenesses; if Ruggles' fallen estate permits him not to have silver spoons, shall he refuse Albata and forswear Nickel? Must he despise engravings because they are only imitations of the original painting?

Oh! may not poor Mary, the cook, wear the baker's little "affection's offering," a glass brooch, because it is intended to look (I will not say, because it looks, for it doesn't) like an emerald?

Spare the brass watch-guard of the shopman out on Sunday—out of kindness, spare that; but, oh! for decency's sake, do not take off that article of apparel which Fanny Fern distinguishes by a name which, on this side the Atlantic, is the familiar for a youthful Richard. Spare it, we say, for decency's sake, although it may be (and we guess, from the absence of cuffs and sleeves, it is) an imitation, a sham, a make-shift!

Will you strip the neat little milliner of her pretty muslin dress, because the pattern consists of roses that are not conventional, and is pinned with

a brooch that is not silver! We protest against such conduct.

Must we see beauty only through your spectacles? Do you think that the savages of Captain Cook's discoveries were happier and better when they learnt to despise glass beads and gaudy bannanas?

We beseech you to leave off tearing our old tastes to pieces. Do you really mean to say that you feel unhappy, uncomfortable, when you see the old erroneous patterns, as you call them, round you? If so, Heaven defend us from ever seeing with "the eye of an artist," as the cant phrase is— it must be anything but a pleasant look-out—by no means a merry-field of observation!

I suppose the Old Masters were wanting in that particular; if not, they must have lived in anything but peace in their days. Why, then poor Bernard Palissy, after all his years of patient toil and experiment, was only striving in vain, for when he discovered his rare enamels and pottery work, he applied it to the making of "vipers and lizards, and various creeping beasts so like life, that if any one beheld them, he should think he was looking upon living things!" False—false taste, my good friend Bernard. How I wish you were alive now

to take up the quarrel in behalf of the Old Taste. You would be just the man to break a lance in her quarrel, as bravely as you did in behalf of the Theory of Springs!

But, my good people, if you will not allow us imitations and shams, what will become of the world? There's an end of Society—the Great Sham! 'Tis the death-blow of the sham passions of the Drama, besides all the Institutions of the Land.

But stay—is there not such a thing as sham enthusiasm—sham taste—sham theories? Can it be possible that Marlborough House should be accused of these? Let us hope, in all charity, not! But are you sure you are doing all for the best?

You will not let Bessie work a brigand in Berlin wool, or Lizzie a spaniel in silk; you strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel—refusing the brigand embroidered by fair hands, but approving the grotesque figure—“half man, half beast, and the rest bird,” as an Irishman would call it—with a horned, long-eared head, that is not only a satyr, but a satire upon man—the finest creation. Your gorge rises at the first, but you bolt the latter, horns and all!

You will not let the child ride astride a stick, or mount a rocking-horse. You make him discontented with the yellow-spotted quadruped that of yore delighted him, and raise in his breast a desire for the long-tailed, neighing animal that, perhaps, after all is not the real thing, but may be only a hobby of your own making!

A VIGIL.

THE Night is fading slowly
To the grey approach of Dawn,
And a silence, still and holy,
Round about the world is drawn ;
Yet still I sit and ponder,
While the fire-light fainter gleams,
And silently I wonder
What are now my Loved One's dreams ;—
Of tears at Parting streaming—
Or of Meeting full of glee ;—
Oh, I know not what She's dreaming,
But I know She dreams of me !

I can view Her in Her slumbers,
Like a dove within its nest,
While Her lover, waking, numbers
The hours of Her rest ;

From Her bosom, gently heaving,
The breath reluctant slips,
With a sigh, as if for leaving
The Eden of those lips—
That—like the coral, hiding
'Neath the wave its rosy wreath—
Disclose with slight dividing
The pearls that lie beneath.

And She knows not, I am waking,
Nor hears the prayer that leaps
To my lips, the silence breaking—
“God bless her while She sleeps!”
The solemn silence breaking—
The silence deep and still ;
“Oh, sleeping, or awaking,
God shield my Love from ill!”

UNDER THE SEA.

SHE said, " My heart is with the silent dead—
My heart is buried 'neath the sullen wave,
That surges o'er the noble and the brave—
My heart is there !" she said.

She said, " No idle tears for me be shed.
Nay, mother, weep not, for *I* could not *tell*—
You could not *know*—that he was loved so well :
You must not weep !" she said.

She said, " Sweet sister, when my breath is sped,
Clasp my thin fingers—clasp them closely—o'er
One tress of that red sea-weed from the shore,
And one pale rose," she said.

She said, " Around him in his ocean bed
Spews the red sea-weed, that the Tempest's roar
Tears up and scatters on the shingly shore.—
But he sleeps well !" she said.

She said, " Ah, mother, in his eyes I read
The love—the truth you could not—could not see,
When you said ' nay,' he turned—he looked on me—
And he was gone !" she said.

She said, " Despairing o'er the seas he fled—
Fled o'er the ocean to a foreign shore—
His gallant vessel will return no more.
He will not come," she said.

She said, " Despairing o'er the seas he fled—
The bark went down amid the silent sea,
And he will never come again to me—
I go to him," she said.

She said, " My heart is with the silent dead—
My heart is buried with the brave and true,
But lay my body 'neath the churchyard yew.—
God bless you all !" she said.



THE CRY OF THE MOTHERS IN ENGLAND.

We have given thee our loved ones,
O'er whose tender youthful years
We have watched with prayer unceasing,
And have wept with anxious tears.

We have given thee our loved ones
To fight foremost in thy ranks
On the bloody heights of Inkerman,
And Alma's gory banks.

We have given thee, **Mother-Country,**
Our best-belovèd ones—
As mothers to a Mother
Did we trust our noble sons.

We have given thee our loved ones—
The ones we least could spare—
And we thought that thou would'st watch them
With a mother's earnest care.

Thou hast left them to the summer's heat—
The winter's snows and damp—
And Cold, and Want, and Sickness
Have been busy in the camp.

We have given thee our loved ones,
The ones we least could spare,
And thy care has been, oh England!
Too unlike a mother's care!

We have given thee our loved ones,
Those who live and those who fell,
We have given thee our treasures—
Our sons—but thine as well!

We have given thee our loved ones,
They have fought and fallen for thee.—
Thou hast erred—yet do us justice
Ere a greater wrong shall be—

By our prayers—our sighs—our sorrows,
By our tears, that fall like rain—
Oh, spare us—spare the bitter thought
That they have fallen in vain!

THE
GATE-KEEPER OF THE CITY OF TOMBS.

“This Life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian
Whose portal we call Death.”

LONGFELLOW.

WHILE I was making a short stay to recruit my health at one of the villages that lie close upon the borders of London (villages that will soon cease to be villages, for the city is fast swallowing them up), I met with a character so sweet, so hopeful, and withal so strange, that I cannot help writing this record of it. It was like a face out of one of Raffaele's paintings—calm and serene, yet not so angelic as to be more than human.

In the village I have mentioned was a cemetery—one of those beautiful cemeteries that are now,

thank Heaven, taking the place of the crowded city church-yards, planted in the very heart of the busy din of life. I do not think that they are useful monitors—these city church-yards.

Does the busy man of the world think of Death as he passes them, except as the time when the wealthy shall lay down their treasures—it may be for him? During the whole long day, amid all the thousands that pass, does one heart grow less worldly, even for a moment, at the sight of those crowded church-yards—does one man think of any God but Mammon?

No—I fear, in sober sadness, no! The swarthy Egyptian, in his feasts, placed at the board a skeleton guest. That dark, silent visitor grinned grimly over the fruits, and sweetmeats, and flower-wreathed bowls of wine: did those revellers by the Nile look upon it as Death, or only as they regarded the lamps, the cushions, and the garlands—as part of the furniture of the feast? And fired, perhaps, with Mareotic wine, Cleopatra may have cast her wreaths upon the brown skull, and have twined her smooth, marbled arms around the mouldering bones.

Truly, familiarity breeds contempt: “Alas! poor Yorick!” and we throw down the skull, and think of the cap and bells, and merry jest, forgetting that

such as that skull is he "who rideth upon a pale horse"—the King of the City of Tombs.

But there is no such profanation of solemn things in the cemetery, separated so far from the town—
hearing only a low humming by day—by night
seeing only the canopy of light hanging over it, as
the denizens of Heaven may hear and see the stir of
the life they have left.

Oh! calm and reverent places, far from all strife
and worldliness! Oh! gentle Mother Earth, who
openest thine arms so wide for thy children! Not
hither does the Mammon-worshipper come—for
him the dead have played their parts; they are
gone, and he has their treasures—let them be
buried; what are they to him? Not hither come
such as he, but those who have known sorrow—in
whose memories the graves of loved ones are still
green—for whom the dead have not ceased to play
a part, but are still silent monitors to commune
with.

Sorrowful, thoughtful hearts come hither—those
whom Death has visited, or who think of him as one
who shall visit all some day—tender, gentle hearts
come hither.

Oh! how solemn is the cemetery, the great City
of Death in Life—the far-spread encampment of

Tombs! With the green trees and the greener grass growing fresh around, the sky soft blue above, and the birds so tuneful everywhere—a great Pompeii is that City of Tombs!

Death is here as at the feast in Egypt, but here his presence is felt, and if Nature flings her garlands on his brow, and twines her fair arms around him, it is with sobs of low, soft winds, and with tears of the rain and dew!

In the midst of the City of Tombs stands the church—whither all the inhabitants have once gone—where they have parted from their friends of the outer world. A sad, strange building is the cemetery church—a consecrated house of God—consecrated by Bishop and Priest, but within its walls never yet has babe been christened, or bride been given away. Never there have the faithful eaten of the Holy Supper, or the sinful people sought for absolution. One solemn service only has that chapel in the cemetery known—the Burial of the Dead—the last farewell of the living to the departed. On its altar never stand the bread and wine, and the fair white linen cloth; but on that table in the centre, beneath the dark, trailing pall, lies the empty chalice of Life, when for ever “the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is broken.”

The deep-toned bell in the turret has never pealed forth in joy—it says only, slowly and solemnly, “Come! come!” And the King and the Priest, the Sage and the Poet, the Good and the Bad, hear that call, and lay aside their toys and baubles, and come to the City of Tombs.

At the gate of the cemetery, which I have mentioned, lived an old man of some eighty long years, grey-headed, bowed a little by the weight of a life past. I conjectured him to be the sexton, or gate-keeper.

The place was a favourite haunt of mine, and I used to wander through the walks, or sit under the great spreading yew for hours together; and after a few visits I added to the other links that drew me thither the friendship of the gate-keeper—Old Caleb. He had lived at the cemetery ever since it had been opened, and had seen many and many a silent inhabitant received into the Great City, whose portals he had kept so long.

This sitting at the doors of Death had given to his thoughts a tinge, not so much of melancholy as of tranquil resignation: he was like an ancient Martyr, or one of those old Pilgrim Fathers whose peaceable character forbade them resistance and strife, and who therefore fled across the seas, there to worship God in tranquillity.

When I first became acquainted with him, his two sons performed his work, and dug the graves, and tended the shrubs and flowers in his stead, for he was growing too old and feeble for the labour.

“No, Sir,” he said, “I leave it for my two sons. I am not equal to it, Sir. My feet are already on the brink of Jordan; the water is washing over them, and I can even see glimpses of the Land of Promise on the other side of the river.”

The old man’s language was like that of the Puritans—it was modelled after the Bible, the very expressions of which he sometimes unwittingly used.

“But why, now that you are growing old,” I said, “do you not quit this place, and find a snug little home, where you will have a more lively and pleasant view than this? Surely it makes you sad and melancholy to live always among graves.”

“Well, Sir, I hardly think so,” he answered; “if it ever makes me sad, it is to see those that have buried a father, or a mother, or a child, or some dear one. Oh! and it’s a woeful sight, sometimes, to see them, poor hearts; but the dead never make me feel sad or heavy. It’s not five paces from my door, Sir, that the minister stands, and

day after day I hear those hopeful words, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life!' I think that an old man like I could not live in a better place than this, where he can always hear those cheering words! But beside, Sir, there are some graves, that I've watched and tended this many a year, that would miss me if I was gone. Aye, and I should miss them, too, for there are voices in them that speak to me of the dead, and warn me to prepare for the time that is coming for me too!"

At this moment a lady in deep mourning came towards us, and the old man, apologizing for leaving me, went towards her, so I wandered on through the cemetery, wondering at the faith and patience of one so humble—at that heart, watching so tranquilly at the gate of the City of Tombs, awaiting until the King, who reigns there, should bid him deliver up the keys and turn him to his rest!

I loitered long among the paths of the cemetery that day. Most of the monuments were of the usual kind, the broken pillar and the sepulchral urn. Why will Christian men return to those old emblems of the Heathen World, when we may find so many beautiful types of our own to place upon the graves of our beloved? What symbol of Hope

is the shattered column, or the urn of dull quenched ashes with no latent spark to tell of another life? Why do we so seldom see the cross watching over the dead—are we lineal descendants of Pontius Pilate, or the High Priest Caiaphas? Because a church, erring, pays worship to the cross, shall we cast it away—erring churches pray to the same God as we—shall we not have the same symbols? Does our church do its best to hasten the time when her erring Sister shall come back to her Father's house, or does she only widen the breach when she thrusts her from her, and scarce will breathe the same air with her?

However, if there were heathen monuments in the cemetery, there were some few that were beautifully touching and simple. There was the old legend, "Lord, keep my memory green!" peering out through wreaths of shining ivy.

One of the monuments struck me particularly, it was a cross of white marble, in the centre of which was a medallion with a bas-relief—a blade of corn with a chrysalis attached to it, from which the butterfly had just issued and was flying upward. Beneath it were the words—"Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!"

Further on I came to a grave on which lay two wreaths of immortelle—beneath that mound of earth slept a poor exile from the “sunny land of France.” The weeping little wife, Clémence, with her English-born child, laid those garlands on the mound above him, and spent the poor remnant of her store in erecting the wooden cross: the moss was green upon it now, and the rain had not spared the everlastings, but the poor *émigré* sleeps well, and doubtless his grave is remembered by the little grey-haired Frenchwoman, that has her tiny shop in Burlington Arcade, and, doubtless, on Sunday she will come—walking in the hot sun all through the dusty town—and she will sit here—on the corner of this slab, and she will pluck up this thistle that has sprung up on the mound. “Let us spare her the task that will wound her poor fingers through the modest faded silk glove—those fingers have toil enough in the week—let us do this duty for them; who knows but it may bring a blessing!” so musing, I dug up the thistle with my stick, and flung it aside.

The next grave was that of a child of barely two years old—not far off I had seen the grave of its father, and now I perceived by the inscription that it was an only child, “aged 18 months—‘ of such is

the Kingdom of Heaven ! ” There in the treasure house of earth—in the world’s treasury is stored up the widow’s darling. She had indeed “of her penury cast in all that she had,” and is waiting patiently until it shall be her time to follow her child, when the ripened grain shall be harvested as well as the opening bud.

Oh! aching mother’s heart—oh! desolate and weeping woman, mourn not thy loved one—the little innocent child, “for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven !”

Not a few of the monuments in the cemetery were erected over great men—noble monuments that seemed to speak proudly of the dead beneath, exhorting all to go forth and become great and famous as they. Silent comments are they upon the vanity of human life. “*Vanitas vanitatum*” should be written over the gate of the cemetery, yet I hardly know, for many sleep here who have not lived in vain—whose works are still living monuments in the land, striving for the good of Man.

I had just passed the resting place of one of the great men of the world, when I came to a grave that was evidently tended with great care. Strange contrast! the costly mausoleum of the great man

was defiled here and there with the green damp-stains, and among its columns the long grass waved rank, but on the modest grave beside it was raised no urn or sculptured figure—the mound was only planted thick with daisies, but carefully did some loving hand tend and weed that little remembrance of the dead, and save one stray forget-me-not that it had spared, no flower or weed grew up among the wee white daisies that grew so thickly on it. “If God so clothe the grass of the field?” was the only legend on the head-stone.

While I was looking at this, and musing over the inscription, the rain came on, and by the time I reached the gates a regular shower had set in; for which I was not sorry, as it formed a good excuse for taking refuge, and enjoying a long talk with old Caleb.

When I entered, he was busily engaged in forming a small cross with wire and osier twigs—this he told me was for one of the graves that he took charge of. “Ah, Sir!” he said, “there isn’t a soul in the world that cares about that grave now except me. It was not long after the cemetery was opened, that one of them was buried. It’s a sad story!

“There was a funeral here, Sir, one day, with

only two people attending—the poor widow and the physician ; he was not a personal friend of the dead man I believe, but had attended him through his last illness, and it was out of respect for him and pity for his wife that he came. He was here after the funeral was over, and told me all about them. The poor man had been an usher at a large school, but the harass and anxiety had brought on a complaint of the heart, and after a long illness he died, leaving his wife without a friend in the world. She had been governess in a private family, but was obliged to throw up that situation at her marriage, and had then become a teacher in a day-school.

“ Hard as the struggle had been, that humble pair had lived very happily ; their lodging, though small — two little rooms in a back street in Islington — had all the appearance of home, the doctor told me, Sir. She had made some pencil drawings, and her husband had framed them, and there were small vases of paper and wax-flowers on the mantel-piece — and there were all the little bits of work that a woman can always make a room look home-like with. Well, Sir, one by one all these disappeared during his illness—from the sitting-room at least, for she kept the bed-room looking still as it had

done, lest he should see the alteration—and he did not; for except to his grave he never left his bed.

“The doctor told me all this, Sir; he saw from the first that the poor gentleman could not live, and it was, perhaps, a blessed thing that he died when he did. Well, he was buried up yonder, Sir, the further side of the yew, beside the little quiet path that leads down from the catacombs. His wife, poor soul, used to come on Sundays and holidays and sit by his grave; she had planted some flowers on it, for she could not afford to put up a stone.

“She brought the flowers herself one day, soon after the funeral—the doctor drove her down in his brougham, and after we had planted them for her, he and I came down here. He said that the plants were the ones that, in better and happier days, had stood in their humble window.

“Ever after, in sunshine and shower, she used to come. I don't believe a Sunday, Wednesday, or Saturday ever passed without her coming over to sit by his grave. One of the plants—a rose—died, so I put another there, as much like it as I could find in the cemetery. I suppose it wasn't wrong, Sir, for the poor lady never knew it, and thought it was still the same.

“Poor lady! she seemed so lone and desolate-

like at times, that it made my heart ache to see her. She would come in and sit down sometimes, for she had a weary long way to go, and she spoke so gently, and was so grateful for any little thing one did for her !

“ Well, Sir, this could not go on long. He died early in the spring—almost before the spring, and by the autumn she was worn to a shadow, poor heart ; and I began to think she was not for staying long among us ; and sure enough, at last her visits ceased, and three weeks after, her funeral came. The girls of the school attended her—their mistress, I suppose, thought it would look right and proper, and would tell well for the school ; so they came, and some of the girls cried bitterly. I suppose she was a kind teacher—she must have been.

“ The doctor was there, Sir ; he told me, afterwards, that the poor lady had not died of any regular disease : he said he had been a physician thirty years, and had always denied that people could die of what’s called a broken heart, but he should never say so again, after seeing her death.

“ You may guess, Sir, that now nobody ever came to tend their grave, so I took the task upon

myself, for the sake of the pale, melancholy face that I missed on Wednesdays and Saturdays for a long time after. I have planted the mound with flowers every Spring since, and I twined some white jessamine over a cross, like this one I'm making, but it has fallen to pieces now, and I thought I would make a new one before it was too far gone. There, Sir," he added, pointing to a little picture on the wall, "that was the poor lady's doing. She left the doctor all her little treasures, and he gave me that as a keepsake of her. Poor heart! and yet she doesn't need pity, for she had nothing to care for left. She's gone 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' She died in God's good time, and the doctor told me she had struggled long and hard; but the wolf was at the door—his shadow was on the threshold, and her sight had begun to fail her, so that if she had lived, he said, she would have had to give up her situation, and go into an asylum. Ah, Sir, 'the righteous are taken away from the evil to come,' and we wonder why it is that such good people die so soon."

I went up to the picture and looked at it: it was not a work of art—it was only a sketch in the usual style of ladies' drawings—a stiff little

bunch of hearts ease and roses, tied with an impossible bow of ribbon; but it was with a sigh that I turned away, and not with a smile, for I was thinking how unevenly the good things of life are divided. The frame of the picture,—the husband's work—appeared to be a slate-frame, neatly carved, and painted black.

Beside this picture, there was a print of the Crucifixion and the Ascension, and a series of wood-cuts—copies of Holbein's "Dance of Death."

"I got them, Sir," Caleb told me in answer to my inquiry, "out of an old paper called 'The Mirror.' They seemed such good thoughts of Death's going everywhere; though I fancy they should not have made him so hideous. You see, Sir, I've got my favourite text. One of my boys learnt for some time at the stone-cutter's yonder, so I made him print it out for me on a piece of stone."

He pointed out to me a small marble block on the mantel-piece, on which was printed in black letters with red capitals, the text, "I am the Resurrection and the Life!" Caleb had now finished the osier cross, and laying it aside, saying:

"There, Sir, that's for one of the graves that

I look after ; but there are others beside, and not a few, that will miss me when I'm gone—when my own grave will want weeding and tending too ! There's a lady that left in her will that no stone should be erected over her, 'for,' she said, 'when my children cease to care about me, and neglect my grave, it may fall to decay altogether, for there will be no one that will care to know where I am laid then. But as long as my children love me, they will plant flowers over my grave!' Her youngest daughter comes here often, Sir, a pretty young lady, about seventeen, and she has asked me to see that her mother's grave is not neglected while she is away. There's seldom any other of the children here—they are grown up, and have homes and children of their own ; but it's but little excuse, I think, for neglecting their mother's resting-place."

By this time the shower had ceased, so I bade the old man "good night," and returned home, thinking of grey-headed Age among the tombs, tending, with feeble hands, the graves of the dead.

Not many days after, I went again to the cemetery, and found the old man in one of the paths, training flowers over a monument on one

of the graves. I stood talking to him, waiting until he should have finished, as he wished, he said, to show me one or two of the graves under his care. When he had twined the rose carefully, so as not to hide the inscription, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well!" he turned to leave, saying :

"I think, Sir, some of the words of Scripture are better than the fine verses they write over some folks. I always think these are very good ; they make one think of the time when they were spoken—just before the Raising of Lazarus, which was a type, I think you call it, Sir, of the Raising of the Dead that is to be at the end of the world. Look there, Sir, there is another of my tasks," he added, stopping at another grave.

It was that of a young officer who had died of fever while quartered in the Tower. On the head-stone hung a wreath of withered flowers, and a few roots of primrose and lily of the valley were planted on the mound.

"It was a grand funeral, Sir, when that young man was buried. His father, his brother, and all the family came here, and the hearse and carriages were crowded with plumes, and they buried him with all the pomp that could be ; and the next

day the real mourner came! She was, I should fancy, a poor milliner, or needlewoman, from the looks of her. She wasn't at the funeral—perhaps she wasn't known to his family; but he had been all the world to her, poor fallen creature! But stay, here she comes, Sir; we had best go and leave her here—shall we?"

As he spoke, I saw a girl coming up the path: she was evidently, as Caleb said, one of those poor women who live by the needle. Who knows the history of her love—hopeless, surely, if not, as is more probable, sinful? Is it Sinful Love now, oh, great Moral World! that watches over that silent tomb, and tends those few poor blossoms? and he who sleeps beneath, perchance, never thought of the truth, and depth of the wealth of love poured forth for him by her who is, perhaps, the only one in the world who cares for him, and the heart that he deceived may be the only one in which his death has left a void. Is it Sinful Love now, or is it purified and chastened by Death?

We went away silently, and left the poor girl to visit the dead in peace. As we reached the end of the path, I turned: she was kneeling—as if crushed and bowed down—beside the grave.

“Poor soul!” said Caleb, “she will stay like that for hours, and then she goes away so sad sometimes, and sometimes she seems as if she were mad with grief. Ah, Sir, you may meet ‘men possessed with devils coming out of the tombs’ now—the devils of Remorse, Grief and Despair.

“In that same grave, Sir, is buried a little child too. I will tell you how it was. Not many months after the funeral, I found on the grave a little dead babe; it was wrapped in a shroud, and laid carefully down among the flowers; it seemed as if it was asleep. I guessed at once whose it was, but when the inquest came, I said nothing about it, for I knew she was not guilty of its death, but had brought it there to lie with him she had loved so well. Well, Sir, at the inquest, the doctors pronounced that the child had never breathed, but had been born dead; so the body was given me to bury.

“I do not think I did wrong in laying it in the grave where I had found it, bathed in dews, as if in the tears the morning had let fall over that little, deserted, withered bud, lying among the pretty flowers. For some time, I missed the poor girl, but I often longed to be able to see her, and

tell her that she could come in safety to see where her child was laid. Some time passed by.

“At last, one evening, she came. I saw her creeping in almost stealthily, so I went up towards her: I could see her tremble as I drew near her, but I said in a low voice to her, ‘Do not fear; the child is buried where it was found—in its father’s grave, and no one knows who placed it there, or that it is buried where it is. Be of good cheer!’ I wish I could have added ‘thy sins be forgiven thee!’ but I am but a poor sinful creature myself, and I could not say so, though I hope and believe it.

“Oh, Sir, it did my heart good to see the grateful look she gave me with her soft blue eyes, filled with tears. The next time I went to the grave, there was a root of lilies of the valley planted there. I knew the meaning of those little pale flowers well.

“Oh, Sir, what a sad, sad life mine would be, amid so much sorrow and misery, if it were not for those words I hear so often. Through all the wailing and sobbing, I hear that cheering message, ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life!’ It reminds me of a trumpet-call like that which shall one day call forth the dead.

“There, Sir, is the grave of a little child of about four years old—a pretty grave, Sir!” and so it was, a simple cross, with only the name “Bessie” upon it—a touching memorial.

“Now, Sir, I like a grave that has no more writing on it than that—just a few words or so. I saw on the paper once, Sir, that some great writer, when he was a boy, and was looking at the graves in a country church-yard, asked where the wicked people were buried, for the tomb-stones said that all who lay there were good.

“Ah, Sir, when he grew up to a man, he would know why we always speak well of the dead—it’s a kind of falsehood that is almost religious I think, Sir, and right. I trust when he died some one was good enough to do the same by him when he was buried!”

I told Caleb that the man who had made that remark did not need a false epitaph. “Æli, vetusto nobilis ab Lamo!” we are not jesting—the words of Horace to his friend come to our lips spontaneously. Gentle Elia—kind-hearted Charles Lamb. Of all men thou least didst need a laboured falsehood to deck thy grave-stone. Thy very name upon the tomb breathes peace and goodness, thou disprove

of the Great Poet's words—"what's in a name?" Loving and tender to thy fellow-creatures—Good worthy soul! Do we not still keep the little root of forget-me-not that we plucked from thy grave in Edmonton church-yard, pointed out to us by one who had been thy friend and lover.

Let them engrave upon the head-stone what praise they will, they hardly exceed the truth of thee—thou gentlest of gentle hearts.

Do we not remember, too, seeing long ago the fine white-headed old man who wrote thine epitaph, to whose pen we owe the best English Dante as well as the sweet lines inscribed upon thy grave! Farewell gentle-hearted Elia, sleep in peace!

Caleb now drew my attention to a monument of some beauty which we were now approaching. It consisted of a square pedestal about four feet in height—each side being between two or three feet broad. On the top were carved very delicately wreaths of heartsease, cypress and other emblematical flowers, while from the centre arose a plain "cross of faith" (as it is called, I believe, by architects), about two feet high.

In the front was a medallion in which a child was represented as sleeping quietly at the foot of a

cross—its safeguard against a lion and a serpent which were prowling round, while a dragon was flying away discomfited.

Underneath were the following lines, taken, I suppose, from some of the old monkish rhyming Latin poems.

“*Serva, Jesu, me jacentem
 Ante crucem, dormientem;
 Nam me lædere hic stratum
 Nec dolores nec peccatum
 Nec serpentes nec dracones
 Possunt, nec scævi leones.
 Radiis protende lucis
 Mihi, Jesu, umbram crucis !*”

The inscription told that the sleeper was a curate who died amid his labours and patient strivings in the cholera time.

“That was what I wanted to show you, Sir,” said Caleb, “I thought as it was a strange tongue, and you told me you had been in foreign countries, (I had described Père la Chaise to him) you might be able to tell me the meaning.”

This I promised to do, and after I had copied the epitaph into my pocket-book, we returned to the gate-house.

While I was there, I turned the Latin into the following English. I purposely adopted an antiquated and quaint style, in order that my verses might be in better keeping with the old monkish rhymes.

“Guard me, Jesu, in thy keeping,
At ye crosse foot calmly sleeping,
For to me, reposing here,
Sin ne sorrow draw anear,
Serpent, worm, ne lyon stern!
By thy beams on high that burn
Cast thy crosse its sweet shadòwe
Over me that sleep below !”

These I copied into the blank fly-leaf of one of the old man's few books. Caleb was quite delighted with them, but more pleased was he when at my next visit I made him a present of his favourite text carefully illuminated on a card. I was at the time very fond of copying old missals, and having become rather expert, I designed an appropriate border and succeeded in making a tolerable illumination. Old Caleb was greatly delighted with this, and begged me to accept in return, the marble block which his son had carved, which I did to please the old man, and there it stands now on my

bed-room mantel-piece—a remembrance of the old man, who so long sat communing face to face with death, and to whose ear there was no message more cheering than the words “I am the Resurrection and the Life !”

Alas! time grew short, and my stay came to an end rather more suddenly than I expected, as I was called away upon business, and for some time I saw no more of the cemetery or my friend Caleb.

Two summers ago I had occasion to visit the neighbourhood of the cemetery again. As soon as I had accomplished the purpose which called me thither, I started to pay a visit to old Caleb.

The cemetery was some mile and a half from the inn at which I had put up, and I amused myself on the way with thinking about the old man, whether he would remember me, and what stories he would have to tell. Strange, that thinking of him as the gate-keeper of the City of Tombs, I never for a moment remembered the possibility of his having been called by Death to give up his Watching and go to his dwelling with the other silent inhabitants.

When I reached the door of his house, I saw a little sunny-haired child, standing in the doorway.

The sight of him, where I used always to meet the old man, struck me first with the idea that he might be dead. Alas! so it was! He had been some time in the grave, and his son now occupied his place, and the child I had seen in the doorway was old Caleb's grandson.

They spoke of him tenderly—the wife with a trembling lip and quivering eyelid—and they were pleased to learn that I was “the gentleman that painted father the picture he was so fond of.” And there it hung still, sure enough, in a plain gold beading; and on the other side of the window was the pencil drawing of heartsease and roses—the work of the poor governess.

I asked them to let the child show me where they laid the old man, but they said it was needless—his grave was close by. He had asked them to bury him near the gates at which he had sat so long.

The place was well chosen—it was directly in front of the entrance and the white surplice of the priest almost touched it as he passed by, uttering his cheering welcome to the new-comers to the great City of Tombs.

The grave was planted thickly with roses and

other flowers ; on the head-stone the inscription ran as follows :

IN MEMORY OF
CALEB ANDREWS,
FOR MANY YEARS GATE-KEEPER OF THIS CEMETERY.
OBITU JAN. 30, MDCCC****.

“I am the Resurrection and the Life ! saith the Lord.”
“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of Our
God shall stand for ever.”

And the flowers were fading, for Autumn was nearly over.

So applicable was the text, that I thought it was at the old man's desire that it was placed upon his tomb ; but his son told me that one of the clergy, who officiated at the cemetery, erected the stone at his own expense, and it so happened that I met with him while I was there, and entered into a long conversation with him about Caleb.

The old man had been calm to the last — speaking sensibly of everything. He died of no disease, save natural decay, and of his mourners, the most were the graves he had tended, for they showed plainly how they missed Caleb's care and tending.

I stopped once more at his resting-place as I went out, and picked a half-withered flower to keep with another treasure that I have spoken of already.

Ah! what a lesson was there to be learnt from that patient Life that sat so calmly at the feet of Death, until that Spectral King stooped down and lifted it into his bosom to sleep!

The watch is over, the duty done! The keys are given into other hands. The grey hairs have gone down to the grave, when their time was ripe; and the gate-keeper of the City of Tombs has folded his arms and closed his eyes after his long vigil, and turned him to his rest.

Truly, "Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening!"



FALLEN IN BATTLE!

MOURNFULLY trailing,
The dark banner sweeps,
While deaf to our wailing
Calmly he sleeps!
Calmly he sleeps—
'Mid our grief unavailing;
While the dark banner sweeps
Mournfully trailing!

Solemnly sounding,
The psalmody floats
Thro' the darkness surrounding
With funeral notes,
With funeral notes—
In wild sadness abounding—
The dirge sadly floats
Solemnly sounding!

Fitfully gleaming,
And pallid with fear,
The torch-light is streaming
Over his bier !
Over his bier
The corpse-candles beaming,
Flicker and veer—
Fitfully gleaming !

Dolefully tolling,
The death-bell's deep boom
Loudly is knolling
Thro' darkness and gloom !
Thro' darkness and gloom
Its notes, sadly rolling,
Echo and boom
Dolefully tolling !

Silently leave him—
His battles are done ;
Heaven receive him !
His rest is begun.
His rest is begun—
Then why should we grieve him ?
He has fought—he has won !
Silently leave him !

TO-BACCHUS.

“ ——— εὐίόν τε πῦρ
φιλάλους τ' ἠρέθιζε Μούσας.”

ANTIGONE, *line* 965.

“He incensed the Bacchic fire and the pipe-loving Muses.”

I.

COME—mighty inspiration—come !
By that you know I mean a
Good puff of smoke, for I “dulci
Nunc meditor avenâ !”

II.

I sing not now the juice of grape
Or chant the praise of Liber.
Him Horace better sings—that old
Falernian imbiber.

III.

And yet I love the Jovial God,
Nor grudge him a libation,
For to his worship this my theme
Has some approximation.

IV.

Our shout, for instance, is alike,
I do not cry "Iacche"—
But with a pleasure infinite
I'll join in "Io Baccy."

V.

The God has bowls of gems and gold,
(Some plated, though—a clear sham),
And so have I!—but then they're made
Of china, clay, or meerschaum!

VI.

He "fills the bowl" with Claret—Hock,
Champagne, or Mançanilla!
And so do I!—but with Returns,
Bird's-eye, or Latakia!

VII.

But there the likeness ends, I own—
And gladly!—For while nimbly,
His fumes mount up into the brain,
My smoke goes up the "chimbley!"

THE REASON WHY.

Nor for Her eyes alone—those clear, dark orbs
Whose hazel depths are fathomless as Love—
Not for Her eyes alone is She so loved,
Who stirs a holy echo in my heart
To every word She utters.—Not for these,
Nor for the sweet speech flowing from Her lips,
Whose every tone is music!—Not for these,
Nor for Her cheek soft as the ripened peach !
Not for Her beauty only do I prize
The one I love above all other maids ;
The charm that binds my heart to Her is this—
Three simple words will tell it—only three—
I love Her best because “ She loveth me.”

“DIXIT INSIPIENS!”

SEIZE me—clasp me to thy bosom, oh, my Mistress, Wild
Despair!

Joy is but a fickle wanton, and she is not half so fair!
E'en when locked in her embraces, rises in the heart a fear
Lest some change, some sudden sadness, the next instant
should be here.

Give me Wild Despair, who quaffeth rosy wine in one long
breath—

What if poison's in the goblet! Drink—it can but bring us
Death;

Life and Death to me are equal—who can draw the bounding
line?

Death in Life I oft have tasted, and I care not which is
mine.

Oh! let others fear the morrow—what its cares and joys may
be,

Little differ joys or sorrows shared by my Despair and me!

When Pandora's mystic casket was by mortal hands thrown
ope,

Trust not the old, doting sages, its last inmate was not
Hope—

No! a better far was left us, kept by an unerring fate,

No! Despair was its last inmate, Mistress of the desperate!

She who recks not of the future, of its troubles and its strife,
In a “Now” she ever liveth—an eternity of life!

Do you tremble at her tresses, shuddering at their snaky
forms?

Know you not that Beauty's ringlets Death shall twine with
living worms,

And that if they deem them present, they will be by Fancy
brought?

Coward! have them real—'tis better, then we have no need
of Thought!

A WREATH OF SMOKE.

A BHAPSODICAL REVERIE OVER OUR NIGHTLY PIPE,
"EX FUMO DARE LUCEM."

"A lone man's companion, a bachelor's friend, a hungry man's food, a sad man's cordial, a wakeful man's sleep, and a chilly man's fire, Sir; while for stanching of wounds, purging of rheum, and settling of the stomach, there's no herb like unto it under the canopy of Heaven."

"WESTWARD HO!"



NSKARAGAL Chumgunder !

Signifying, gentle reader, "he who fills with smouldering weed the hollow cane-tube." This is the language of the Oudeises, a tribe of Guinea, a peculiar race of which Ferguson gives an interesting account in his "Five Weeks of Fever on the Gold Coast." They are, he says, of a darker skin than

the other tribes of those parts; "their only dress being the human hair which grows on their own heads (where also they wear it) but their king, (or Chowchobber as he is called), adds to this apparel, two other items on state occasions—namely, straps and studs," but the learned author through some oversight does not tell us how this is compatible with the fact of his not wearing either trousers or shirt.

But we are wandering.

Anskaragal Chumgunder! Come hither and bring to me my smoking cap—nay, not the red fez, "Persicos odi, puer, apparatus," thou son of an incremated father!—but that other more splendid head-gear, even the pale blue, with the maize silk embroidery and tassel, that which at the fancy fair I purchased.

Bring hither also my pipe—my hookah, and I charge thee to see that the rose-water is pure, fresh, sparkling, newly dipped from the fountain of the garden of Gul. If thou dost neglect this, may dogs sit upon thy father's grave, and cats mollarow upon thy mamma's tomb!

Under pain of this curse, the intelligent black brings to me the required articles—I say intelligent, because a casual observer might believe mine

attendant to be a baboon attired for a bal masqué; and, therefore, I call him so, because that he seemeth to be the connecting link between humanity and apishness, if indeed he be not the latter as seems not improbable.

Take forth, oh, Anskaragal Chungunder, a match from yonder box on the mantel-shelf—that box whereon is depicted an eminence that suffereth from an eruption, even a mountain with the measles, poor crater! which mankind calleth Vesuvius!

By the mystic power of friction, oh Ebony! shalt thou ignite the match; and accend the rich weed in the bowl of the hookah therewith.

So!

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

It is alight, the smoke curleth up, the rose-water becometh talkative; it babbleth as a child—purra wurr pobble bobble bobble, it waxeth musical!

Now will I be the Sultan, I will be the Khaleefeh Haroon al Rasheed, and thou, oh offspring of the Oudeises, shalt be Mesroul!

Take hence these European shoes—bring to me my slippers, those of scarlet cloth, adorned with golden braid. There—now I am Al Rasheed! And yonder soft-cushioned plump easy chair, shall

be my Sultana,—fat is esteemed a beauty by the Orientals. What shall be thy name, oh, light of the Harem ! Shall it be Moon-face or Pomegranate-checks or Lily-nose ? Behold I cast my slipper to thee, and thou shalt hold it as a token of love, young Gazelle-eyes !

Mesrou, pour me out a glass of sherry, and call it sherbet. Give it me with a salaam. So ! Now rub the black button, that groweth in thy face where a nose should be, upon the toe of my slipper. Now, I will give thee ten thousand pieces of silver to purchase a ship-load of Turkish tobacco withal ! Thou shalt answer to me “ On my head and mine eyes, oh, Commander of the Faithful ! ” Pshaw, you black rascal, what if it be only a fourpenny-piece—buy me an ounce of bird’s-eye.

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble.

Now will I be an Alchemist. I will be Roger Bacon, and thou shalt be mine attendant, and my hookah shalt thou watch, my magic crucible. Beware how thou touchest it, minion, else shalt thou be blown up. Dost know, Ebony, that thy prototype, meddling with Roger’s crucible, was torn in pieces by the explosion. On thy life thou touchest my hookah : I will blow thee up rarely an thou dost.

Yet nay now, I will be Roger Bacon no longer, for methinks the devil had him finally. I will be Trithemius who was a right worthy Abbot. Give me the poker it shall be to me for my crozier. Thou, Chungunder, shall be the spirit, Hudekin, who grievously tormented the learned Trithemius. Avaunt demon! else will I exorcise thee, sirrah, with my crozier!

But stay, shall I be a Rosicrucian—or Paracelsus—ay, and thou shalt be mine attendant sprite Azoth—yet no I cannot imprison thee in the jewel of my ring, thou black diamond!

Fill me a glass of sherry: this time it shall be the Elixir of Life. See how it shines and sparkles in the goblet!

Aha—now I have it, I will be Doctor Dee, and this wine glass shall be my mystic crystal. Fetch me hither my warming-pan, oh, familiar mine! I will transmute a piece thereof into silver, and send to our gracious Queen Elizabeth. Stay, let me refer to my magic crystal—ha—what do I see in it. Wondrous creature—it is a cherubim! It hath wings—truly and legs! 'Pshaw, it is only a fly in the sherry!

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

I am one of Macbeth's witches now. "Bubble,

bubble," thou shalt be my caldron, oh hookah! oh Hubble-bubble! Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble! but no, I am no witch, I am a wizard—for am I not a he, and moreover wear no beard as witches wont.

Now I will be a poisoner!

"Now I have tied on thy glass mask tightly,
Can gaze through the faint smoke curling lightly,
As thou pliest thy trade in thy devil's smithy,
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?"

I will bury my nose in my wine glass, it shall be my glass mask. I will be Saint Croix, and thou, oh Anskaragal! art the fair Brinvilliers—what if thou art hideous, Human Jet, and she was lovely, I will think of thee that thou representest not her physical but her moral conformation, and that was black and ugly as thou!

Now "what is the poison to poison her prithee?" Hast thou arsenic dissolved in cymbalaria—the wond'rous Aqua Tophana, Fair Lady: or hast thou succession powder?

No? Well we do not need the manna of St. Nicholas of Barri, or the white impalpable meal; we can slay her with anchovy of red lead, with

pickled french beans of verdigris, or chocolate of death-bearing compound !

Oh rare !

“ To carry pure death in a ear-ring, a casket,
A signet, a fanmount, a filagree basket !”

Shall we carry pure death in an impure piece of anchovy toast—shall we administer it in the verdant pickle? But let us have a care of the analyzers of the Lancet !

Fill me my glass, sweet Brinvilliers, we will call the sherry hippocrass now or Aqua d'oro, so here is to thine eyes, mine angel of darkness !

Now is my pipe the retort, wherein we distil the deadly poisons. Aha “ for the faint smoke curling lightly !”

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble !

Now am I a raging dragon, snorting out fire and smoke. See now, Chumgunder ; mount thy famous charger “ Ten-toes” and prance hither as a St. George—in mourning. There, now thrust thy lance, that is a tobacco-stopper, into my gaping jaws, into the bowl of the hookah. Press the weed together—so it shall burn better. Well done, by thy father's beard, well done, oh Anskaragal !

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble bobble bobble !
See what a whiff—truly, I cannot behold thee,
Ebony, for the smoke I have puffed forth—I have
it ! I will be a cloud ! What says the poet,

“ I bring fresh showers to the thirsting flowers ! ”

Yea, I am a cloud—a nimbus—a hugeous mass of
vapours ! How dost thou, Goodman Nubes ? That
is thee, Ebony ? How dost feel—drizzly ? See
now, Polonius, am I almost in shape of a camel—or
backed like a weasel, or am I like a whale—very
like a whale ?

Yonder moderator lamp with its bright globe
shall be my sun. Hail, splendid luminary ! Shall
I lap thee in my vapourings ?

Purra wurr hobble bobble bobble !

Such be my rhapsodies over my pipe. I am a
king, a sultan, a philosopher, what I will, and my
negro becometh a marquise, a spirit, a familiar, in
turn. But enough. Purra wurr pobble bobble
bobble. I will whiff quietly. I will see visions,
and dream dreams, while the smoke is curling
delightfully around, and the rich aroma of the weed
is floating about me like an atmosphere of Dream-
land.

Chungunder, bring hither the punkah. Anskaragal, fetch me the feather fan. Now, when I bid thee wave, thou shalt dissipate the cloud that contains one vision and I will behold another.

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble.

See, what is that? Why a mop—nay, 'tis a palm tree. What a fine gallant beneath it: look he hath on a white ruff collar round his neck, and he weareth a small black hat and plume, and his trunk hose are slashed and his cloak is velvet, and in the middle thereof is the print of a muddy foot (and that no small one). Beshrew me, if it be not Walter Raleigh, and there is talking to him a coppery man, who has around his loins an apron of feathers, and is bedaubed with ochreous compounds. He is Ma-ra-to-pa, "the whistling eagle," and see, he smoketh. His pipe-stem is a long reed, and the head is of stone carved strangely. See, the Sachem offereth his pipe to the traveller. Puff, puff, puff! The good knight is pleased, the fragrance tickles his palate—but hold!

Ha! he waxeth pale, he becometh squeamish—truly he is very sick. Wave! Wave an thou lovest me, Anskaragal, let us not see him longer, lest it remind us of the time when we crossed the channel last autumn!

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

Another vision! Good den to thee again, noble Sir Walter, it rejoices me to see thee better. What, hast thou overcome thy repugnance? Well done, brave knight, puff away if it please thee—but—hey, hi, hoy, whoo, stay, stop!

By Jove he's done it!

Sir Walter, thou must discharge the villain; he hath soused thy gentle person from head to foot with water; yet hold thy hand, for the knave thought that thou wast afire, smouldering with spontaneous combustion. Go and change thy raiment, friend, and do thou, Anskaragal, wave! Let the noble gentleman perform his toilet in peace.

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

America again, a fine forest, pardie! What think you, friend Humboldt, of that tree by way of timber? Not more than twenty feet in girth. Why, it must have been growing when Columbus landed, what think you, worthy Baron, it will make a fine chapter in *Cosmos*, eh?

Look ye—there's a cactus—only fifteen feet high, why you might poke one of your learned eyes out with a single spine of it. See there's a mimos

Ah—boooooo—oh ugh! Lord bless my soul!

Here is no less than a dozen of those half-

naked savages jumping upon me from behind a tree.

Oh Lord! Here, you gentleman with the curtain ring in your nose, just take your foot off my small ribs and remove your tomahawk from such close proximity with my head, and keep in mind, next time you spring upon a stranger from behind a tree, to ask him first if he be nervous. My good Sir, with the fish bone through your ear, do not, I beg, regard my capillary attractions so covetously—if you want a scalp take the Baron's—his is nice and soft and white, while mine is only a sort of rusty bay. Oh! you won't, eh? Pardon me, my dear Humboldt, if I leave thee in this predicament, but self-preservation is the first law of Nature!

Wave, Anskaragal, yet stay—no! It is all right, he is not handling his tomahawk with savage intentions. No—it's a pipe of peace. Here, Baron, the Great Buffalo's Tail is a mighty chief, and requests thee to take a whiff. Here goes—puff, puff, purra wurr pobble bobble bobble! Wave, Ebony, the savage hath his pipe hollowed out in his tomahawk, and it delighteth me not to smoke out of it, for he may have brained mine uncle with the same weapon not an hour ago. Wave! Enough of the calumet!

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

Truly I am in the Celestial Empire now. Come hither Pih-Keo-Lin-Shang, I would talk with thee. Faugh! offer me not thine insidious opium, give me a pipe of tobacco, fill it from thine embroidered pouch.

There, now I am seated, Haou—signifying “art thou well?” Tsing, which means “hail.” Let my pipe have a bamboo stem, I pray thee. Now give me a cup of tea—there—put a few leaves in my cup, Yung Chow, and pour in boiling water upon them, and I beseech thee keep thy thumb out of the cup, or there will be no room for the liquid, for in truth, it is but a porcelain thimble. It is bitter but nevertheless pleasant. Let us converse, my good Pih-Keo &c. Tell me now what call you those two birds yonder with forked tails? Who may be those three stout gentlemen passing over that bridge there by the willow? Truly a magnificent tree is that which overshadows thy dwelling, its branches seem as though loaded with plum-puddings. Who shall bid yon fisherman to bring hither of his finny spoil? Dost not think, friend Pih-Keo &c., that, if thou hadst caused the palings in front of thy mansion to be laid down in a straight line instead of their present zig-zag, thou wouldst have saved money?

Verily, of all places, put me down in the land of "Golden water-lilies" and place a pipe between my lips! What a sensible people it is! It must be a Celestial Empire where among the seven lawful reasons for getting rid of a wife, the third is talkativeness.

Put a little cap on my head with a "button atop," like the grand Panjandrum's brain-shader, I'll be a Chinese and cultivate a pig-tail. I'll begin talking Chinese this moment, hark!

"Kivo yeh noo-puh yay. Ying-keih-le ke yay."

"I'll speak my part at once, cue and all!" as Quince saith to Flute the bellows-mender, but till my queue shall grow I will wear an eel-skin for the nonce.

But best friends must part, Pih-Keo-Lin-Shang, so farewell! And see what a valedictory card the Mandarin hath presented to me, all crimson and gold leaf—thirteen feet long by eight wide, see in what repute the Seric worthy holds me, for know you not that the Chinese measure their complimentary cards by the respect they feel for you? Wave, Chumgunder, wave!

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

Ho! for the land of black puddings and waltzing!

Wie befinden sie sich? How dost find thyself,

Karl. Give me thine hand! Now do I see that thou art after mine own heart, for while one hand is extended in friendship, behold is not the other groping in thy pocket for thy tobacco pouch?

Give *me* also a pipe, a long-tubed china-headed pipe. Let me have depicted on the bowl the face of 'die schöne Trudchen,' or a green-coated, booted Jäger. Let it have a tassel, I pray you, or it is no pipe of mine. There, now am I a true German: let me have a glass of schnaps. Thanks no, I'm afraid if I partake of Saur-Kraut it will destroy the illusion. Shall I troll thee a Vaterland song? Good evening to the good Frau and the kleine Mädchen—knitting, of course! How busy the fingers are here, in this lovely land. Oh! this glorious blue Rhine, with its —steins and its —bergs!

Invest me in a cap, with a dangling tassel and a long straight peak slightly retroussé as my nose (I am a German now), on the tip of which nose stick me a piece of plaster.

So! Am I not a fine Bursch? Sa—sa you are a dumm Kopf, my friend! Ha, art offended? Go to—let us have beer, I will drink a duel with thee—or pad thyself all over save thy face, get thee thy sword, and I will fight thee.

Ach leider ! I begin to feel my valour ooze away—this padded hero seemeth fierce ! Wave, Anskaragal ! I will resign all—the cap and tassel, and the plaster on my snub nose ! Wave ! Anything for a quiet life !

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble !

Truly it is a musical sound the bubble of the water in my hookah. It is better than a babbling visitor, for it speaketh not unless spoken to.

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble !

But whither will not my tobacco-visions carry me ? Stick a paper cigarette in my mouth, clap a sombrero on my brain-box, roll me in a cloak, hang a rapier by my side—carefully, I beseech you, lest it get between my legs and trip me up—call me Don Pedro, and I'll tell you about bull-fights and mantillas.

Or put a potato in one hand, and a dudheen in the other, clepe me Pat and I'll ask “yez to thread on the tail av me coat !”

Or wrap a towel round my head, put me tobacco in a hole in the ground, and let me draw the smoke up through a reed introduced through the clay, and I'll worship Buddha and talk Hindostanee.

Or roll me up a cabbage leaf, and hide me away to smoke it surreptitiously in a hay-loft or hen-house

with much nausea and tribulation of spirit, and I'll call myself a British school-boy.

Or stick a quid in my cheek, and call me Jack, and shiver my timbers! I'll tell you about the Blue-jackets and the Lancaster-gun battery.

Or give me Caftan and Calpac, and I'll be a Persian, and smoke a tchibouque; or a Turk, and wield a narghili.

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

Here am I in my Lusthaus, on the banks of a canal in Holland; is it not a gilded ginger-bread, beautiful, little summer-house? Lo! my feet are webbed as I'm a Dutchman! Am I broad enough in the beam? No? Then fetch me a pillow! Get me a herring, I will eat, fill me up Hollands or Schiedam. Light me my pipe.

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

What thousands of smokers could I not enumerate! And if many be they that smoke many are the pipes that *be* smoked. Long-tubed, snake-like, musical, such as thou, my hookah! Scented cherry or slender bamboo, white willow, or what you will—a fawn's foot silver-shod or amber and mother-of-pearl—oh! innumerable are the varieties of stems!

But the bowl—pure meerschaum, feather-light—

blushing (as the fragrant weed burns bright) as pink as a maiden's cheek at the first spark of love.

Then how carefully have we watched it as it changed to that soft rich brown below! How anxiously have we noted the regular white line above! Oh! how well dost thou become thy silver mounting!

But clay—shall we neglect thee—common clay, potter's clay, homely clay, our brother? No—hail to the long straws, the big-bowled churchwardens, the Milo cutties and the swelling outline of the Gambier!

Oh! the numberless devices of clay! The skull with opal-like eyes—the Bacchus with green enamel vine-leaves and præternaturally white eye-balls—Uncle Tom bending beneath his basket—the long-bearded philosopher—the turbaned Turk—the lady of flowing curls—the thousand other shapes that clay is heir to!

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

Now I will go forth to battle in thy behalf, fair Nicotiana, sweet nymph! Ho! Chumgunder, thou shalt be mine armourer, and equip me for the contest.

Bring me my tobacco-jar for a helm—give me my willow-tube for a lance, the lid of a cigar-box for a

shield. Thrust me a pair of Cutties into my girdle for pistols ; hang a Churchwarden by my side for a sabre ; sling my tobacco-bag behind me for a powder-pouch ; stick a cigar and a shred of bird's-eye into my helmet by way of plume.

And for thee, Chumgunder ; clap an empty cigar-box on thy head, put my tobacconist's account at the end of the cherry stem, and bear in thy left hand the cigar-ash tray—so shalt you appear a squire of olden time, armed with *bill* and target.

Fair Nicotiana ! thou shalt bid me farewell from the battlements, as lovely dames were wont to do in days of yore. Hast thou no favour to give thy knight, that he may wear it in his casque— a glove, a kerchief ? I have it—a scarf !

See now, Anskaragal, give me the yellow ribbon from around that bundle of cigars. So ! Now bind it round mine arm, there ! Farewell, sweet lady ! I will go forth and fight in thy behalf, and return victorious, or be borne back dead on my shield, though, in truth, I fear me it is over small to bear so large a body.

Now, trumpets, sound the charge ! Fling out my pennon to the wind. (Hast thou not a bird's-eye handkerchief, Chumgunder, that thou canst flourish in lieu of a flag ?)

Now, here stand I, the Champion of fair Nico-

tiana, ready to defend her against all comers, and in proof thereof, there lies my gage !

Tell me now, Prejudice, her foe, and Affectation, her traducer, what harm hath Nicotiana done? I grant, there is poison concealed beneath a fair exterior, but go to! Who is not deadly? Who hath not the power to slay? Might not every woman be a Jael—every child a Jack the Giant-Killer?

Oh, Great Plant! oh, Wond'rous Weed! fragrant as the spices of Araby! when thou lapest thy votary in thy wreaths, when thou steepest his senses in Elysium, driving away all carking cares, who shall then accuse thee of being noxious?

Why, thou teachest us patience, as Angling is said to do. Fie upon that old Isaac Walton, with his living frog spitted on a darning-needle, his wriggling worm run upon thread like a glass bugle, his silvery fish gasping on the bank. Out upon his cruelty!

No, *thou* shalt teach me patience; let me learn of thee, as slowly, day by day, I watch thy coming beauty, oh, virgin pipe! Untiring will I tend thee day by day, as thou turnest to a rich brown, until, reward of all labour and patience, thou shinest like polished jet!

What better companion for a walk than the great

herb! Ha! what an odorous whiff did we catch from between those green hedge-rows! See how the blue curls of smoke float away as yon wanderer puffs at his little black pipe. Good day to you friend—we are all friends—we smokers. Thou art my brother, navy of the sable stump; and thou, venerable Pomona—ancient apple-woman, with thy short clay—what shall we call thee—sister or brother? for truly thou hast a beard that vies with the fraternal mentum.

Calming art thou, oh pipe—rightly entitled the pipe of peace! Thy clouds wrap us from the outer world, and its harass and trouble. Soothed by thy tranquil powers, we can rival the Spartans of old, who, under Leonidas, marched to certain death to the sound of pipes!

Purra wurr pobble bobble bobble!

Who would not do the same to the soothing music of a hookah? Alas, that our language has no sound that can adequately represent that lulling, bubbling voice. Perchance, in some more soft tongue—in the liquid language of some fair island far away in the Pacific, that low, cooing utterance may be the most endearing and beautiful sentence possible—the very perfection of love-whispers! Sad that English can only represent it by—

Purra wurr pobble bobble bob—

Ah me! my pipe is out—my visions are gone!
Oh! what inspiration—what dreams does not Tobacco give us, like those of opium, without opium's fearful consequences! Ah, well! my pipe is out! Type of Life—vapour, smoke! Farewell. We have come to the bottom of the bowl—ashes to ashes!

The last spark is out—the last curl of smoke has gone eddying up to the ceiling.

Ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting! Twelve! It is midnight.

Go back to thy resting-place, my Hookah, to thy mat of green Berlin wool and gold twist on the chiffonier! Go back to thy resting-place then, oh my Hookah!

Anskaragal Chumgunder fadeth away; he was but a tobacco-built Eidolon—a smoke-framed image. He is gone!

Our pipe is out—our reverie over. It is midnight, and we are no longer Sultan or Alchemist, Bursch or Hindoo. We are none of these; we are only—sleepy!

THE BURDEN OF THE ISLES.

OH, thou great Nation, "shadowing with wings,
That sendest thine ambassadors by sea!"
Where sleeps thy spirit while the war-cry rings
"God for the brave and free!"

Seated so grandly on thy cliffs primeval,
Thy feet foam-sprinkled by the hoary main,
Queen of the Islands, wilt thou suffer Evil
And Tyranny to reign?

No—thine old pulses through the land are beating;
The fire is kindling in a thousand eyes,
And thousand lips are that one prayer repeating,
"Oh, Lord, our God, arise!"

Wilt thou be sluggish, mine own isle of Britain,
In setting weak and trampled nations free—
Thou—in whose laws the great decree is written—
"My soil is Liberty!"

Before mine eyes there comes a glorious vision—
I see the Great Millenium of Peace,
When in the world shall be no more division
When War and Strife shall cease.

Victory no more shall change with fortune fickle—
No blood be shed as in the times before,
But Man shall shape the sword into the sickle,
And War shall be no more !

But—ere That Time—mine own fair isle of Britain,
Thy flag shall float the bulwark of the free,
And by *thy* mighty hand the Tyrant smitten,
Bound at thy feet shall be !

THE FOUR SEASONS.

A MADRIGAL.

RING a ding a ding!
In the early Spring
Wooded I the old woman,
Wooded and wed her too, man!
She was rich and old,
And, if truth be told,
I did wed her gold!
Well—and would not you, man?
 Ring a ding a ding,
 How the bells did ring
 When I wed in Spring!

In the summer days,
With the sun a-blaze—
Sickened the old woman;
As old women do, man!
Spite of draught and pill
Grew she very ill.
Sick and “sicker” still
All the time she grew, man!
 In the summer days.
 With the sky a-blaze,
 She got worse always!

Ding a dong a dong !
 Autumn came ere long !
 Died the poor old woman !
 Well—what could I do, man ?
 Why, I put on black,
 And, as tears did lack,
 In a cup of sack
 Wetted mine eyes two, man !
 Ding a dong a dong,
 With a funeral song
 Autumn came ere long !

Ring a ding a ding !
 Let us quaff and sing !
 So died the old woman !
 And for me and you, man,
 Left her wealth untold ;
 And this vintage old
 Of her guineas gold
 Cost me not a few, man !
 Well, she died in time !
 For by Christmas chime,
 Ring a ding a ding
 We can drink and sing—
 We good fellows two, man !
 Ring a ding a ding,
 Let the joy-bells ring !

IN THE WEST.

THE Sun is sinking to his golden rest
Over the happy valley of Her birth—
Over the purple hill-tops of the West—
The West—to me the dearest spot on Earth.

And She, perchance, upon his fading rays
Turns the love-treasure of Her earnest eyes,
And the great Sun, enamoured, ling'ring, stays
To steal another glance before he dies.

Oh, happy Sun! that seest Her each day
In that green valley of the glorious West,
While my sad heart sighs to itself alway—
“Oh, when shall I be near Her—and at rest?”

A SONNET.

CALL not that Death, which closes weary eyes,
And turns the heart into insensate dust,
Chasing away all bitter memories
Of care and sorrow—falsehood and mistrust ;
But call that Death, which severs heart from heart—
To die is peace—'tis more than Death to part—
Parting—ah, parting ! Death without its rest !
“Too deep for tears”—and far too deep for words,
If e'er thy pangs could be in verse exprest
Or whispered low to melancholy chords,
Then would my Heart—its saddest utterance lending—
A last “Farewell” breathe forth upon the air,
Surpassing all sweet Poesy—and ending
In one long sigh—break—break—in its despair !

THE POPULAR AIR.

“Arbitrio popularis auræ.”

HOE, ODES, *Book III. Ode 2.*

“Certum est mustelæ posthac nunquam credere.”

PLAUTUS.

THE fondness of the metropolis for some particular tunes is marvellous. Out comes a song—and in a fortnight it is all over town. The Ri-tooral of Vilikins has hardly ceased to be heard in the streets, before the Rat-catcher's Daughter breaks out with a refrain of Doodle-dum.

But the universal favourite for a long time has been “Pop goes the Weasel,”—high and low—rich and poor—Alexandrina and Augustus in the drawing-room, and Bob and “Sally in the Alley,” equally delight in it.

Though many songs have risen and died out

since, that tune will not give way, but breaks out again at intervals, like that extraordinary dramatis persona in the tragedy of Punch, who is pursued by that hero and his cudgel—now disappearing in the house (which flaps to and fro at the wing) for a time, and anon popping his head out of a window, uttering the cabalistic word “Shallabala,” and before Punch can get a fair blow at him, disappearing again, only to pop out afresh on the other side, and repeat his invariable remark—now lost for a time, but sure to appear again ere long, until finally he knocks Punch on the head, and with a triumphant “Shallabala,” disappears from the scene.

Just in this way did “Pop goes the Weasel” persecute an old bachelor friend of mine—figuratively giving him a knock-down blow, which induced him, in the hopes of finding benefit from “change of *air*,” (in two senses), to write me the following letter.

“MY DEAR FELLOW,

“Do, for mercy’s sake, ask me down to stay with you in the country. I can’t stand it any longer—this confounded ‘Pop goes the Weasel.’ I am a bachelor, as you know, about thirty, in good health,

and not in bad circumstances ; but I'm sinking, by Jove, Sir, I'm sinking under that Weasel. All the boys in the street whistle it—(there—there's one at it now.) All the girls yell it. There isn't an organ in London that can't grind it out *ad infinitum*, and those wretched Italians grin at one round their jingling, twangling boxes as if they were giving one a treat—a surprise, by Jove ! Would you believe it, I gave one of the ragamuffins a half-crown yesterday for grinding ' Jeannette and Jeannot ?' you've no idea what a relief it was—quite a novelty.

“ Only the other day, I astounded a butcher-boy by blessing him—yes, Sir, and giving him sixpence for whistling ' The gay Cavalier.' ”

“ You must know that that Weasel, Sir, has destroyed my plans of future happiness. I was on the point of laying myself and fortune at the feet of Miss Berlyn Wollaston (you must remember them living in B— Street) when in popped that horrid Weasel between me and my hopes.

“ On Monday—my birth-day—she sent me a pair of slippers, her own work. Picture to yourself my horror on opening the parcel. On a light green ground there were no fewer than six of those atrocious Weasels—all ' popping' out of little black

lozenges, intended I suppose to represent the holes of the vermin. You may guess I left the 'Weasels' to 'pop' the question. *I* never shall. How could I marry a woman afflicted with the Weasel mania?

"By George, it's too bad! there's that boy again; (or another very likely—they're all in a league to drive me mad)—there he goes—wouldn't I 'lumty-dumty-dumty-dum-pop-goes-the-Weasel' you if I were behind you, you young howling nuisance!

"There's another—the next door lodger strumming it on her piano.

"Only this morning, my nephew, young Hare, came to see me. You recollect the lad, rather a favourite of mine. Well—he's going to Oxford, so I gave him a lot of good advice—not to get into scrapes with the Dons—or run into debt—but above all not to let any one persuade him to bet or gamble, and, by Jove, Sir, the young puppy had the impudence to wink at me, and tell me 'to catch a weasel'—yes, Sir, a weasel—'asleep' and if I succeeded in doing so, he advised me to 'nip his tail' or 'shave his eyebrows,' or some nonsense of the sort.

"I've cut the heartless young rascal off with a

'Goldsmith's Animated Nature' (page turned down at the article 'Weasel.')

"It's getting too much for me. Ask me down or I shall be dead in a week—it's the prevailing epidemic. It's the 'Weasels' everybody's got now, —not the measles; by the bye, I verily believe if there were any more rhymes to it besides 'measles—teazels and easels' there would be some one fool enough to versify it,—though to be sure a man who would write on such a subject would descend to 'please all' and 'tease all' and such rhymes.

"For goodness sake, ask me down by return, or you will never see alive.

"Your friend,

"JOHN WYLD RABBET."

THE MOSS-TROOPER'S DIRGE.

HAME came the gude steed,
Hame came the grey,
Hame came the bonny steed,
That bore my love away.

Hame came the gude steed,
Besoil'd wi' mony a stain ;
Hame came the bonny steed—
My love came nae again.

Hame came the head-gear,
The saddle it came hame,
Hame came the stirrups
And bridle a' the same.

No Jeddart axe it hangit
Beside the saddle-bow,
It stay'd behind to guard its lord,—
And he will come no mo' !

Hame came the gude steed,
At the ha' gate she stude,
But she left my love on Crammock Lee
All waltering in his bluid !

THE PALMER'S TREE.

“A goodly Elm, of noble birth,
That, thrice the human span,
While on their variegated course
The constant seasons ran,
Through gale and hail and fiery bolt
Had stood erect as Man.”

HOOD—“THE ELM TREE.”

ALAS! that the Dryads are silent—else could the patriarch elm that stands in the middle of the village tell curious tales of the olden time. Why, even now, what hosts of traditions cling around its grey, gnarled, weather-beaten bole. Its very name brings before me a vision of

“Files arrayed
With helm and blade,
And plumes in the gay wind dancing.”

It was planted in the days of the Crusaders—the Palmer's Tree. Why, it must have been set in the ground by some "pilgrim from beyond the seas." Picture him with his long garments and his wide-brimmed hat looped up with a monster cockle-shell—his staff and little wallet—his feet shod with sandals that have known the dust of Palestine, have been wetted with the waters of Jordan, that have trod in the footsteps of Our Lord.

Or mayhap it was planted by one of the Brents—the old Lords of the soil—whose grim monuments—grim from their very shapelessness—lie in the church.

He, perhaps, planted it when, with the red cross on his shoulder, he buckled on his arms and set out for the Holy Wars.

Years went by—and beneath that tree—when its leaves were russet-tinged in the last bright days of autumn—he may have stood on his return a grey-headed, broken-spirited pilgrim, worn out with sickness, dangers, and imprisonment.

It may be he laid him down under that tree and died—who knows?

Strange times has it seen since then, when the village green spread around it, and the Maypole, that stood near it, was its rival in height (it would take

a tall Maypole to rival it now), when the dance, and sport, and song went on merrily, and lovers whispered under its boughs.

And afterwards, when dance and song were held a crime, when the Puritans hewed down its neighbour, the Maypole, who knows whether some fugitive Cavalier may not have hidden himself among its branches?

Of these times we have no tradition which says that Cromwell stabled his horses in the church—that is too common for our village—there's hardly a church in England where they do not tell you that. No, we have a set of Communion plate to show, that was given to the church by Mary Ludlow, the niece and god-child of the regicide. Part of the manor once belonged to Pym—ay, and, to be sure, in former days it all belonged to Sir Thomas Gresham. So you see the village is highly connected. One of the Brents was a commissioner under Cromwell—Wolsey's Cromwell—and one of them fought at Bannockburn. There was a pair of stone figures—of himself and his wife—in the church once, until a sacrilegious Quaker had them both tumbled into a hole because they had their hands in the Romish attitude of prayer.

The Lady Claricia had been rescued since then,

and reposes calmly on the shady side of the porch now. She was discovered by the old sexton as he was digging a grave, and not a little surprised was he at finding "the Mummy of Egypt" as he called it.

Let us hope that the old knight will turn up some day—surely his non-resistance should have hindered the Quaker from entombing him. I have often heard of burning—but this is the first case I have met with of burying a man in effigy.

In the days of King Hal the old tree must have seen strange things when the monks were expelled from the Penitentiary, which stood where the Manor House does now.

This Penitentiary, I am sorry to say, for the credit of the village, was a kind of Botany Bay to Glastonbury Abbey, whence they sent all the rebellious and impenitent brethren to undergo the punishments fitted for their crimes. The church-yard is full of graves, made North and South instead of East and West, doubtless the way in which they buried those who died in their sins. I wonder whether they lie any the less comfortably on that account.

In the church there is a curious little niche like a sentry-box,—in those days it was connected with the Penitentiary by a long corridor, and by this, they

brought those who were condemned to the most severe punishments, and placed them behind the iron bars to hear mass. Who knows in what dark cells those miserable men were kept;—perhaps the only glimpse of the blue sky they ever got was through the windows of the church as they gazed up wistfully from behind the grating.

But if the Penitentiary was a place of torment to them, the presiding Priest found it a very Paradise. The garden stretched blooming around, and in the adjoining grounds—now called Wynyards—were the blushing vineyards loaded with purple grapes.

The last presiding priest is the gentleman, who after death was promoted to the enviable hoonur of Principal Parish Ghost, as you shall hear.

Of course, everybody knows about “Jack Horner, who sat in a corner and pulled out a plum;” those verses, though now only looked upon as nursery rhymes, had another meaning once.

In the time of bluff King Hal, as I said before, Abbot Whiting was the Superior of Glastonbury, and at his steward's instigation, the King seized him, and finding him guilty of imaginary crimes, sentenced him to death.

When the news was told at the Penitentiary, the presiding priest determined to wait until the last

chance of a reprieve ;—he could not believe that the good Abbot would be sacrificed to the falsehood of the steward. Can you not fancy him, the night before the execution, watching eagerly from the church tower for the messenger that he hoped to see riding along the top of the hill to bring good tidings. In vain—the sun sunk lower and lower—until slowly behind the purple hills to westward, his last rays disappeared ; and the evening star shone out over the death-bed of the sun, like the pardon of Heaven above a dying penitent. Anon one by one the stars came out, and presently the moon rose, and by its mellow light the priest buried his silver cross and went forth on the wide world hoping and praying for better times when he might return and reclaim his concealed treasure. The better days never came, and the priest died in exile, but on the anniversary of the night when he buried it, if report says true, his spirit is to be seen in the churchyard, watching over the buried cross. “ Alas, poor ghost ! ” we too have sympathy with you—we have buried our treasures “ many a time and oft ” and are waiting with you for the better days ! The old tree and he must know each other well now, and look at one another and wonder for how many years longer they shall spend that silent vigil together.

The Abbot was hung, drawn, and quartered at Glastonbury, according to the amiable usage of the time, and the steward retired to his great country house, and lived merrily on the Abbey treasures— which, strange to tell, he had forgotten to give up to the king with the information that led to the Abbot's death.

The unjust steward is the Horner of nursery rhyme !

That is one of our ghost stories, but we have others beside, and on the whole, are rather rich in legendary lore.

There's a little lane overhung by trees that meet overhead, and form a dim arcade, in which is a pump that not a soul in the village dare pass at night, for a mad fiddler who, once upon a time, dwelt there, made it his favourite seat, and there, with his violin, he would get up concerts with the nightingales. After his death, his ghost took to frequenting the same spot, and is to be seen there at dark performing on a silent fiddle ; a fact only to be accounted for by the weakness of his intellect, and the strength of habit, for the place is by no means a pleasant spot to resort to.

Another of our ghosts has of late deserted us.

Not many years ago, an old woman in a red cloak was to be seen trudging along the church path—invariably disappearing if any one was courageous enough to follow her. At the same place too might be heard the spectre steed. The church path was bounded on each side by a hedge, and was terminated by a stile, crossing over which you found yourself in the open fields.

Those who went along there late of an evening heard sometimes the sounds of a horse galloping fiercely along on the other side of the hedge, but when they crossed the stile, all was suddenly silent, and not a living object was to be seen. I suppose it was the ghost of a highwayman, for there were once a great number of those gentlemen along the high road on the top of the hill. There is in the parish, a cave, where one of those notabilities resided. It consists of a hall, a stable, and a forge, where the robber used to shoe his horse backwards, in order to baffle pursuit.

But to return to the old woman. When the village was undergoing some alterations and improvements, the church path was changed, and led up to the church in a different and more picturesque direction, and never since that time has anything been seen or heard of the aged dame. I suppose she



was unable to find her accustomed promenade, and so gave up her perambulations in disgust at the spirit of innovation which had swept her favourite haunt from the face of the earth. Whether the ghost part of the story is true or not, I cannot say: one thing is certain, however, namely, that a skeleton was found in a ditch by the side of the old path, but how it came there, or whose it was, nobody could tell.

But we are forgetting the old tree of justice, for such it was when old Brent used to have his great arm-chair placed under it, and there he would sit, "in state, in doublet and trunk hose" and deal out jurisprudence, and a fine old fellow he was, no doubt, this same old Justice Brent.


But the tree was the tree of hospitality too, and beneath it the weary traveller, or the pilgrim to Glastonbury, was regaled on white bread and cheese, with a foaming black-jack creaming over with rare home-brewed ale.

But the old tree must have its unpleasant recollections too. Some of its boughs turn up short at right-angles like an elbow, showing how, in the troubled times of Monmouth, men were hung from its branches and swayed there rotting away piecemeal. When the Manor House was undergoing repairs, a skeleton was dug up under the

pavement of the Great Hall. Some unhappy follower of Monmouth, doubtless, had crawled thither and died in concealment. Hurried and secret were the funeral rites when that hapless man was buried, late at night, perchance, when the savage soldiers of Kirke were sunk into drunken slumbers. At the same time that the bones were discovered, they found a golden spur that had formerly jingled at the heel of some noble knight, long since turned to dust.

But brighter times came for the old tree, and loud was the shouting when the most learned elder of the village stood up on the stone seat, that is built around its stem, and read aloud the glorious news of Waterloo and the flight of "Boneyparty." Then, too, there was the dinner and dance held beneath it at the Peace Jubilee. Proud days must those have been for the old elm; the sap must have tingled in its branches with a vigour that reminded him of the jolly old times when the mummers footed it gaily round the flower-wreathed May-pole.

But now the village green is gone—nay, the carpenter's shop, the village lounge, that more lately stood beneath it, is no more, and the old tree writhes out his snaky, branch-like roots through stones and gravel, instead of soft velvet



turf. But old and young still resort to the stone seat at its foot : and on Christmas-Eve, the carollers, when they go round, always stay and rest under the elm, where there is sure to be found a steaming jug of "hot spiced," and before they go on, they sing a carol there : I always fancy that they sing best there, but ill-natured people attribute that to the jug of "hot spiced" aforesaid.


The village people have lots of strange things to tell of the old tree. Some of them gravely assert that the Israelites planted it after they crossed the Red Sea—to be sure, it may be so, but if they did, they certainly went slightly out of their way to do it.

Another of the traditions is rather derogatory to the grandeur of the elm, and improbable moreover, because it seems to be of later date than the tree. It is, that Palmer was a suicide who was buried at four cross-roads with a stake run through him, that the stake grew and flourished, nurtured by the rich food at its root. There are not four cross-roads there now, whatever there may have been then ; and it is hardly likely that the stake would be so planted as to be able to grow, so I reject the legend altogether.

To one of the other village traditions, I can give a little more credence. They say that the branches

never fall except on a Saint's Day : a belief handed down, no doubt, since the days of the Romanists, when it was quite possible, for their calendar has a saint for pretty nearly every day out of the three hundred and sixty-five. Be that as it may, I did certainly see a limb fall—and that in a very mysterious manner—on the Eve of St. John, some few years ago. There was hardly a breath stirring to turn the leaf of an aspen, when I heard a low moan, and slowly a great branch parted from the stem, stripping down a great piece of the bark with a strange tearing sound, and then it fell with a crash to the footpath beneath. There was something solemn in that sudden fall—like death in the midst of life—on that still summer twilight. I don't know whether it was on a Saint's day that a branch came down with a sacrilegious robber who was making fire-wood of the old elm. It seemed like a just retribution on the part of the patriarchal tree—as if, when it saw the impious wretch climbing up to desecrate its grandeur, it had shaken off indignantly the branch to which he was clinging, and hurled him to the earth, breaking his leg with the fall.

Rare old patriarch ! there he stands, strong and mighty still, seeing trees shorter-lived grow up and die around him.



The limes in the church-yard, where the murmur of the bees sounds as if the dead were whispering together, have grown up and are falling to decay.

He saw the fall of the stately yews that stood of yore in the church-yard, until some senseless farmer hewed them down, because, forsooth, they overhung his field, and the cattle browsed on them, and were poisoned as they deserved to be for their impiety.

And not generations of trees only has he seen, but ages of men have sprung up and died off since first he was planted. The boy and girl who played beneath his shade—who first whispered their love under his boughs—he has seen their wedding go by; and years after, the funeral train has passed slowly beneath him, and one by one they have dropped into the grave, leaving their children to play, and dance, and woo in their turn beneath the old elm.

Long may wind and storm spare him to spread his sturdy branches round, and whisper to the summer air the legends of old times. Years hence he shall flourish, when the present generation, with its children and children's children, has gone to rest, and new faces, and new customs, and new homes, and lives, and happiness have sprung up around the grey old elm.

1855.

THE lion rises from his lair
Beside the ocean tide—
The eagle from his eyrie sweeps
Upon his pinions wide,—
The banners of two lordly lands are floating side by side.

Sternly against the sullen foe
The gallant ranks advance,
While high above the glittering line
The bright twin standards glance,
And flows beneath the best—best blood of England and of
France.

The deadly din of cruel war
Goes upward day and night,—
The wail of loved ones for the loved
That ne'er shall bless their sight,
But louder still the mighty cry of "God defend the right!"

The lion shall not lay him down
Until his foemen die,—
The eagle to his lofty crag
In triumph back shall fly!
The banners of those lordly lands shall float in victory!

“WHA’ WILL YE GIE TO PRINCE CHARLIE?”

THE Graeme he rode into Glenalvon,
And blew on the horn at the gate,
And up rose the Laird and the Ladie
From the old castle ha’ where they sate.

Syne up rose the Laird’s only daughter,
And down fra’ her bower she came,
And up rose old Elsie the nourice
And louted down law to the Graeme.

“O, wha’ will ye gie to Prince Charlie,
To help him to come by his ain?”
Saies the Laird, “I’se gie vassals five hundred
To get him his kingdom again!”

“O, wha’ will ye gie to Princee Charlie,
To help him again to his right?”
Saies the Ladie, “I’se fill yer blue bonnet
Wi’ the red gowd and siller sae white!”

“O, wha’ will ye gie to Prince Charlie,
To help him ’gainst traitorous churls?”
Saies the maiden, “I’se work him a banner
Embroidered wi’ silk and wi’ pearls!”

300 "WHA' WILL YE GIE TO PRINCE CHARLIE?"

Then spake him auld Elsie the nourice,
" My gudeman died for him lang since,
But gladly I'se gie ye my ae son
To fight and to fa' for his Prince !"

WHITHER ?

“ Whither, O brooklet say !
Thou hast with thy soft murmur
Murmured my senses away.”

LONGFELLOW.

I STOOD on the banks of a little brook—a little babbling, brawling brook—whose banks were moss, studded with violets and tender lilies.

And my heart said to the streamlet, “ Whither ? whither ?”

Then the streamlet prattled to the pebbles in its bed, and murmured, “ Onward—onward—ever onward to the sea—the great, wide, glorious sea, into whose bosom sinks the golden sun—to the happy sea, whose waves are emerald and gold ;” and the brook hurried on.

As I walked up the stream, behold, there came one with long golden curls, and he was young. His eyes were eager—no look to right or left did they cast—ever onward—onward flew his earnest

glances as though they would outstrip him, and reach the wished-for goal before him.

And my heart said, "Whither ? whither ?"

And the youth answered hurriedly, "Onward—onward—ever onward to life—to fame—to happiness!" And he passed on his way; but behind him came a fair, fair girl. Her eyes were looking onward towards the youth, and she trode upon the violets and lilies, but she plucked not one.

And my heart said, "Whither ? whither ?"

And with her sweet, low voice, she answered, "Onward—onward—ever onward to love and happiness—whither *he* goeth—thither I follow, to be his bride, and dwell in joy for ever." And her light step was no more on the flowers, but she followed him she loved.

Anon came an old grey-headed man. His step was slow and his eyes dull, yet he walked onward without cease, and in his arms he bore a chest of riches: and he cursed the violets that they stayed his path, yet he bore the coffer uncomplaining.

And my heart said, "Whither ? whither ?"

And he replied, "Onward—onward—ever onward to wealth, and ease, and quiet—to the enjoyment of years of calm, rich old age." Yet was he old and grey already, but still he hurried onward—ever onward.

And lo ! I beheld the sage—and my heart said,
“ Whither ? whither ? ”

He turned not his eyes from the far horizon, and spoke, “ Onward—onward—ever onward to knowledge—god-like knowledge.” Then he closed his thin lips, and passed on.

Then I said within myself, “ Lo, mine Heart, thither turn all eyes—thither fly all thoughts—thither bend all steps. Let us turn—let us too go onward—onward—ever onward ! ” So spake I, and turning back, I went down by the side of the stream, and the stream grew wider, and deeper, and more silent—and, behold ! by the side of the bank, beneath a willow, was moored a little boat, and it was shaped like a shell, “ with a swan-wing for a sail ; ” and the name of that boat was “ Thought.” Then I stepped in and loosed it, and it bore me down the current. At length, I came to the last bend of that broad river, and I heard the voice of the sea, and an eddy bore my boat into a little creek amid wild weeds, and rustling rushes, and tall flags. The boat stood still. Then I leaped to land, and the reeds murmured, “ Onward—onward—ever onward,”—and at my feet was a grave. There was nought save a green mound, and by the side of it lay that iron coffer that I well knew. Its lid

had burst open, and the gold and gems lay scattered among the long grass, and the buttercups shamed the gold !

Then the cypress leant over me, and said, " See, he fell as he was pressing onward—ever onward ; he looked for a longer journey, but it was not granted ; and his riches, whom do they prosper ?"

Then I wept for him, and said, " Farewell, my brother."

But the reeds murmured " Onward," and I obeyed ; and behold ! from the brow of the hill I saw the sea ; but it was dark and restless, and its waves were not as emerald and gold, but like black palls, with white foam borderings.

And the river was lost in the ocean.

On the wide—wide, sandy, desolate shore I saw a wretched hut, and by the mouth of the river, but apart from one another, I saw two figures.

Then I entered the hut ; and no fair—fair girl was there, but a pale woman, and a child lay in her arms. Then I took the babe and kissed it, but it was cold, and a violet and a lily were in its hand. I gave the child back to the mother, and my heart said to her, " Whither ?"

She pointed upward to the sky, and said, " Thither ! My husband liveth and toileth, but my child is gone thither."

And I saw that those other twain figures were the youth and the sage. And the sage beat upon his breast, and he stood far out, with the water of the ocean at his knee. Then I asked him, "Whither?" and he groaned and said, "Thus far, and no farther! but knowledge is not of Here, but of There!" and he pointed to the Heavens. He spake again, and said, "Lo, I have come thus far, and know nothing, and am but as a child: would that I might go thither and know all."

Then I turned to the youth, that was a youth no longer, but a man, with the number of his years marked on his brow;—his hair was dark—it grew long, and lank, and unkempt, and it was touched with silver—and I said to him, "Whither?" and he moaned back an answer, like the sad sea-waves at night, "Thither! Fame is nought, and happiness is not to be won—Life is miserable—but thither, thither, up in the silent Heaven, thither go I!" and he toiled on.

Then I spake to the silent river, "Whither? whither?" And the waves tossed up their spray toward Heaven, and said, "Thither, to the bright blue sky!"

Then the sun broke forth, and I could see the water-mist rising, and the drops of the river

mounted up his golden beams like the angels on the golden ladder of the old patriarch's dream. And anon there floated a bright purple cloud in the calm serenity of Heaven.

Then saw I that the sun gleamed on the sails of a vessel that came steadily across that dark sea to that lone, desolate shore; and the name of that vessel was "Death." And as the winds breathed in the sails and whispered amid the cordage—they murmured, "Onward — onward — ever onward beyond this dark sea—onward to peace, and rest in Heaven." Then those watchers on the shore cried, "Welcome." So the sage cast his books into the sea, and the weary man laid by his labour, and the mother came forth of the hut, and folded her child to her heart—and amid them stood the shadow of the old man, but his iron-bound chest was not with him.

And they cried "Welcome." And the winds murmured from that stately ship, "Onward—onward—ever onward!"

And my dream faded.

THE NORTH STAR.

LISTEN, Northmen, while I sing to the harp's resounding
string

Of an ancient Ocean-King, and his name was Wulf the Bold;
And of all the Vikings brave, who the surly northern wave
In their gallant vessels clave in the glorious days of old, —
Few there were, I ween, who dare e'er themselves with Wulf
compare,

Or attempt his fame to share, for like tempest was his wrath;
When his black brows clouded grew, then his words were
short and few,

But his blows were swift and true. Woe to him, who crost
his path!

For he did like Hymir frown, who from Asgard looking down
On the mountains scathed and brown cleft the iron-sinewed
rocks,

And his eyes were grey and stern, and like autumn-tinted
fern,

Or like Thor's (that seem to burn) were his closely clustered
locks,

And his long, red beard did rest on the iron-plated vest
That defended his broad breast 'gainst the foemen in the
fight.

On his shoulders he did wear, trophy of a savage bear
He had slain within its lair, mantle thick of snowy white,
And its long, sharp teeth were set in his helm, as coronet,
Where the rim and head-piece met—long, and white, and
sharp were they,

Broad, and thick, and bright, and round, brazen plates with
iron bound

Was his buckler. Many a wound had it saved him in the
fray.

Hanging in his baldric wide, clashed his falchion true and
tried

'Gainst his thigh. 'Twould oft abide many days within its
sheath,

But if once its steely ray glittered forth into the day,
Never was it laid away till it saw a foeman's death.

Thus equipped the warrior stood, as a Sea-King ever should,
Gazing at the angry flood from his vessel's lofty prow.

Deep was he in thought, I ween, and a watcher might have
seen

Thoughts, like stormy clouds at e'en, flit across his darkened
brow ;

There were foes upon the sea : Oh, and very wroth was he,
Faithful to the North Countrie, went he boldly forth to
fight ;

But the Nornas mystic three, sitters by the wondrous
tree

Igdrasil, did him decree Hela's guest to be that night.

At the stern were Sagas two, singing to the listening crew
Of the deeds that Thor did do in the land of Jötunheim,
How the ocean cup he quaffed, of the Midgard snake by craft
Shaped like cat, how Skrymir laughed and of the old Woman
Time.

Sudden o'er the harp and song rang the war-note loud and
long,

Gathered then the warrior throng round their leader eagerly.
On the far horizon's rim, on the ocean's very brim,
Vessels, indistinct and dim, sailing up the wind they spy.
Never gave he word or sign till he counted up the line
Of his foemen. Vessels nine counted he beneath his breath.
Then he turned him to his crew, "Death or slavery—of two
Choose ye, Northmen staunch and true." And the North-
men shouted, "Death!"

Then he drew his weapon forth, bright as meteor of the
North,

Well a warrior's pains 'twere worth to behold its deadly ray.
As he grasped its hilt aright, sudden grew his knuckles
white

As the Thunderer's grasping tight magic Mjolner for the
fray.

Then those Northmen, staunch and true, forth their trusty
weapons drew,

In the sea the sheaths they threw, that they ne'er should
need again.

Ægir from his depths arose to behold the vessels close,
Swiftly—swiftly came the foes: O, the rowers rowed
amain.

On the foremost bark he rushed—swift the gurgling waters
gushed
Through her timbers torn and crushed—down she settled in
the deep,
Not a shout from either side—not a sound save of the tide
Dashing from the oar-blades wide as the vessels onward
sweep.

Now the other eight begin, rowing swift, to hem him in.
Then arose the warlike din of the closing of the ships.
Hand to hand, and knee to knee, thrice they made the foe-
men flee.

One more vessel 'neath the sea, with her broadside riven,
dips.

With the rudder in his hand, at the helm Wulf takes his
stand,

Well the ship obeys command, and the oarsmen stoutly row.
Vainly do the foemen strive in the bark their prows to drive,
Deftly as a thing alive she avoids the fatal blow.

But, alas! of little good is their stoutest hardihood,
Odds too great to be withstood are the hostile vessels
still.

Soon the warlike, echoing shout o'er the silent deep breaks
out,

Cries of warriors staunch and stout, and the horns with voices
shrill.

Then spake Wulf, "My Iron-hearts, boldly have ye done your
parts,

Ply your javelins and darts—keep the enemy away.



Mind ye now how with one voice ye of Death did make the
choice,

Not to let the foe rejoice, though they hold us thus at bay?
I descend now to prepare noble death that all may share,
They shall know what Northmen dare!" Then he hid him
down below.

Not a shout the Northmen raise—not a cry of blame or
praise,

Grim their blood-stained swords they raise,—well their mean-
ing doth he know.

Often and again the foes round that fated vessel close,
Breast to breast exchanging blows, still their crews are
driven back.

All the deck is covered o'er with dead bodies and with
gore—

Streaming blood that evermore trickles down her timbers
black.

Sudden 'mid that desperate band, with a blazing, flickering
brand

Waved above him in his hand, strode forth Wulf from out
the hold.

"I have lighted here a pyre—on whose flaming wings of fire
We shall higher rise and higher to Valhalla of the Bold!"

Then that valiant, dauntless crew—firm, and staunch, but
very few—

Round about their leader drew, raising a victorious shout;
And the foeman rowed apace, and withdrew some little space
As from an accursed place—and the smoke came eddying
out.

From beneath the smoke upcurled—up the masts and cordage
whirled,

Like a spectre sail unfurled by the fingers of the wind.

And the ship began to glide, borne by a mysterious tide,

O'er the ocean dark and wide, till it left the foe behind.

On the blazing hulk did swim, through the evening vapours
dim

To the far horizon's rim—far as straining eye could range—

Then the foemen from the deck saw the distant burning
wreck

(Lessened to a little speck) undergo a wondrous change—

While those sturdy men of war watched it glimmering afar,

They beheld a glorious star rise where erst the wreck had
been.

Under Thor's divine control, slow it glided to the Pole,

Centre of the orbs that roll in night's canopy serene.

Then returned those vessels seven, telling how that star in

Heaven

Was to Wulf the Valiant given, for his noble deeds in war.

And it ever beams on high—centre of the northern sky,

And the name men call it by, is the Changeless Northern

Star!

NOTES.

Hymir, or Ymir, was a frost giant, who is said by his frowns to have split the rocks; Asgard is the dwelling of the Gods (answering to Olympus); Jötunheim, that of the giants. Yggdrasil, or Igdrasil, is the ash, whose roots are in the regions of Hela, or Death, and under whose shade the Gods met in council. Beneath it sat the three Nornas, or Fates—Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld.

Thor was the Thunderer, possessed of a magic mallet, with which he slew his foes; he is often described in the Sagas as clenching it until his knuckles whiten. The story of his voyage into Jötunheim is well known. He was challenged to perform three feats by Joki, the giant king. The first was to empty a horn, the liquor in which he was surprised to find little diminished after three deep draughts. The next feat was to lift a cat from the floor, in which he also failed, only lifting one of its feet from the ground. The last was to wrestle with an old woman; in this struggle Thor was worsted, the old crone forcing him down on one knee. On his departure, Joki explained to him all these illusions, for such they were. The horn was the sea, which his deep draughts had caused to ebb considerably. The cat was the Midgard serpent, who is coiled round the middle of the earth, under the sea, in the regions of Ægir, the Neptune of the Scandinavians. The old woman, with whom he wrestled, was no less a personage than Eld, or Time himself.

LIGHT AND SHADE.

OUT of the East there arose the form of a beautiful woman ; over the purple hills she came, floating upward—floating upward, like a bright cloud at sunset. Her face was as the face of an angel, and one silver star shone on her forehead. Around her brow was twined a wreath of silver lily flowers, and her hair went streaming adown over her long robes, like the rippling of a golden river ; her robes were of the brightest purple, studded with starry tears. And the wafting of her rustling garments was like a strain of “exquisite music.”

Her white arms were folded on her bosom, and her long bright curls twined adown and around them—golden bracelets of Nature’s own making : and her eyes were like Heaven—blue,—the clear, deep blue of Heaven, that is not a colour, but the

immensity of air, so the azure Heavens of her eyes took their hue from the depths of soul, that looked forth from them.

So passed she over the earth towards the West—the dolphin-tinted West, where the sun stood still to gaze at her amid his purple throne-canopy of clouds, with their glorious, golden fringing.

And I said, “Surely, it is the Spirit of the earth—the bride of the great sun.”

Beneath her, as she passed, sprang flowers of every kind—forget-me-nots, blue as her own deep eyes, velvet heart’s-ease, and sweet valley-lilies, odorous roses, and all sweetest flowers bloomed forth at the spring-tide of her presence.

But the sun cast her shadow behind her.

A dark—dark shade as of a passing cloud: it darkened the flowers and they withered, it passed o’er the blossoms and they died.

Yet she saw it not, for she was gazing at the West, where the sun stood still and turned to her the golden looks of love.

Therefore passed she on, still smiling—smiling ever—smiling fresh blossoms from the earth. And lo! a voice—“Pass on—float forward—brighten earth with thy sweet presence, but, as night followeth day—as darkness followeth sunshine, so

must shadow follow light. So it is ordained. It cannot be otherwise—the brighter the light, the deeper the shade.”

Then the voice died away, like a mighty wind at midnight.

The Shadow was Death, but the bright Form was Life.

Yet, was not this all, for lo ! a brighter form—a more majestic presence—tongue of man cannot describe it.

And that presence was Eternity that followeth Life and Death.

And behind it cometh no Shadow.

DONALD.

I.

GIE me my dirk, mither, gie me my plaidie,
Gie me my bonnet—my bonnet o' blue—
Sure ye'll no greet if your braw Highland laddie
Follows his Prince like a gude man and true—
Follows the standard o' bonnie Prince Charlie.

II.

Gie me my target wi' siller nails studded,
Borne by my grandsire in Bothwell's red fray ;
When wi' the gore o' the foeman was bluided
The claymore I ask ye to gie me to-day—
Gie me a broadsword to draw for Prince Charlie.

III.

Fare weel, my mither, and fare weel, my Annie, !
Fare weel, my brithers, and sisters and a',
Hear ye the pibrochs they're liting so cannie—
They're calling your laddie—your Donald awa',
Calling him forth to gang fight for Prince Charlie.

IV.

Greet nae sae sadly now ! What if I perish,
Fighting in front 'mang the true and the brave ?—
Surely ye a' will my memory cherish !
Shall I no sleep in a glorious grave ?
I shall ha' fought and ha' died for Prince Charlie !

IT WAS.

It is strange that some words, simple words, seeming to mean nothing to the many, bring strange thoughts to the few. How few of us are there who are not impressed by some particular word or phrase, which the rest of the world passes unnoticed.

To the ears of one man, perhaps, only in the world, one word has a strange, unearthly music—an indescribable echo.

“It was.”

Yes, reader—look at those two words: “It”—a pronoun—neuter gender, third person, singular number; “Was”—a verb—past tense—third person singular, to agree with its nominative case “It.” Take them so—they mean nothing!

But together “It was—It was” is what the sea is ever murmuring, as it dashes on the shore. The grey, angry sea, as it rolls on the sands the fragments of some hapless vessel, that has gone down amid its dark, mysterious waves, cries hoarsely —“It was!”

The grey, angry sea, as it heaves and tosses its hoary waters over some submerged city—over some little sea-side village swallowed up by its ever-en-croaching tide, whispers low, as it washes amid the ruined walls—and laps around the columned terraces, or the desolate hearths—“It was—It was !”

To me those two words have a solemn and sad tone—a deep meaning—“too deep for tears, and far too deep for words !”

In olden time was a city, “throned upon seven hills.”

She sent her armies and her colonies through all the world, as the heart pulses forth blood through the arteries of the whole body.

In its grand gorgeous streets paced the greatest orators—the greatest poets—the greatest warriors. In its glittering palaces and golden temples were treasured the triumphs of all arts.

And now—ruins—desolation—poverty. “Roma fuit,” and we close the classic page, sighing softly—sighing sadly—“It was—it was.”

There is an old man sitting before his solitary fire. His head is bowed upon his hands, his eyes are closed, but he is not sleeping. He sees a fair form—a slender, girlish form, and by her side a youth, that might be he save that *his* hair is grey, and *his*

frame feeble. And those two wander on happily, through green, fresh meadows, by plantations of dark odorous firs, and the vision fades away, and again he sees her, and in her hair are pure white orange-blossoms. And yet again, they pass before his eyes, and in her arms she bears a little frail bud—a little sleeping child. Then he groans to himself, as he opens the plain gold locket that hangs from a ribbon next his heart—and he sighs, and that sigh says, “It was.”

In that locket, is a dark brown curl, and a little golden lock of a child’s hair. “It was.”

And so to me come those two words—“It was.” As I sit here and think, and picture to myself the happy hours I have spent—there rises before mine eyes a mist—the mist of unshed tears, and from out that mist a voice whispers “It was.”

The happy hours that flew so soon, when we were near her—the happy hours spent with dear friends, with our parents—our brothers—our sisters—all these pass before us, and from the chambers of our desolate hearts the voice of the past wails forth—“It was—It was.”

How those two words must have haunted the mind of that great ambitious eagle-soul, that perished in its sea-girt prison, in the rocky islet of Saint Helena. As the sun sank blood-red before

his dying eyes—the same sun that rose “glorious, golden” on the field of Austerlitz—how they must have rung in his ears.

Then must the light have rekindled in his darkened eyes, and the blood have returned to his pale cheeks—the strength of will to those stern lips—for a moment, only a moment, and then a struggle, and all is over, and never again to him shall those words sound, but on the ears of those weeping faithful ones around him they must have fallen like the strokes of a passing bell, and each one as he looked on that calm marble statue of iron-willed ambition, said to himself, “It was!”

And when at the “foot of Pompey’s statue” sank down the bleeding clay that had been Cæsar—when Brutus thrust back his weapon into its sheath—as he turned his eyes from that lifeless, mangled form he had once called his friend—his heart leapt up into his throat, and choked the words “It was” ere they reached his lips.

I do not think there could be a more touching epitaph for a grave, than those two words, “It was.” In their small compass, what a tale would they tell of faded joys—withered hopes—and beauty fled for ever!

And yet, I would not have those two words, only!

HELEN IRVING.

ONE of the best of the ballad selectors of the day, in his introduction to the sad story of Helen Irving, who was killed by a shot, aimed at her lover by his rival—Bell of Blacket House, remarks, that although many of our modern writers have attempted to versify this tragic tale, none have ever succeeded in writing anything worthy of themselves or it.

He adds, “perhaps there was never so much written on any subject so pathetic with less honour to the Muse.”

After this, it may be perhaps presumption in me to make the attempt, but I may surely be pardoned the vanity of wishing to fail, where so many great men have failed before me—

“Non sine gloria cum Pompeio vincimur.”

I have imitated as far as possible the language in which the original ballad was written.

FYTTE THE FIRST.

THE birds sang merry in the bush,
And merry in the tree,
When Helen gaed to meet her love
On fair Kirconnel Lee.

Her kin, I wis, the Fleming hate,
But aye she loves him well:
And aye she hates her kinsman's choice,
The traitorous, cruel Bell.

And sae, as true loves ever do,
They wailed wi' dole and dree,
And meet somewhile in the auld kirk aisle
On fair Kirconnel Lee.

But as they walked by Kirtle's wave,
That whispers through the Lee,
To the ither bank there came the Bell,
And wroth was he to see!

He leant his arm on a willow bough,
His musket on a stane,
And Helen saw the cruel deed,
The Fleming saw it nane.

She threw her arms round Fleming's neck,
She leanit on his breast—
A shot rings out—a sigh—a sob—
And Helen is at rest !

Then Fleming, when he saw the deed,
Sware oaths fu' deep to Heaven,
That till he slew the murderer foul
No rest might him be given.

And far awa' across the sea
Fled Bell, that traitour grim,
But like his shadow, without cease,
The Fleming followed him !

FYTTE THE SECOND.

The sun is bright in fair Madrid,
All in the Spanish land,
Where in the braw, broad market-place
The marble fountains stand !

But ane is there among the crowd,
The Fleming kens him well—
His scowling face—his stealthy pace—
It is the accursed Bell !

He drew his falchion fra' its sheath,
His falchion true and tried,

Saies "Ae gude blow for Helen's sake!"
And smote him in the side.

Saies "Ae gude blow for Helen's sake!"
And smote him in the side;
And Bell lay grovelling on the earth,
And wi' a curse he died.

He hackit him in pieces sma',
Wi' mony a cut and thrust,
He hackit him in pieces sma',
And trode him in the dust.

He kissed his fauchion's brown, brown blade,
He lookit on them a';
He thrust his fauchion in its sheath,
And silent strode awa'.

His squire he tauld the dreesome tale
To listeners mony a one,
The proud auld Spaniards grimly smiled,
And said it was weel done!

And he has ta'en a gallant bark
To bear him o'er the sea,
To tak him where his Helen lies,
On fair Kirconnel Lee.

FYTTE THE THIRD.

They turfed her grave wi' lilies white,
Eke and wi' violets sweet,
And they planted ae stone at her head,
And ae stone at her feet.

The sexton's bairns they playit there,
The ling, long summer hours,
And decked the cross on Helen's grave
Wi' purple pansy flowers ;

The purple pansy's tearfu' flowers
They plucked wi' muckle care,
To tell to all 'twas Helen's grave,
And " Love lay bleeding there."

He came across Kirconnel Lee,
Beside the Kirtle's wave,
And silent laid himself adown
Upon fair Helen's grave.

The sun rose up, the sun it sank,
Up cam' the siller moon,
The little stars through a' the night
On Helen's grave looked doon.

The moon rose up, the moon it sank,
The little stars are gone,
But still he lay on Helen's grave
I' the blushes o' the dawn.

The ae bairn to the ither said,
"He's sleepit mony hours."
The ither said, "He sleepis weel,
Wi' his face amang the flowers."

The ae bairn to the ither said,
"He lyeth very still."
The ither answered to the ane,
"Let's ca' our mither till."

And first she raised his clay-cauld hand,
And syne she raised his head,
And syne she ca'ed her husband till :—
Bauld Fleming he was dead.

She ca'ed her gudeman to the kirk,
Saies "Dig this grave for me,
And let him bide, by his Helen's side,
On fair Kirconnel Lee."

They rowed them in each ither's arms,
They buried them wi' care :
And Fleming and his Helen true
They sleep for evermair.

ANGELS.

Spake I to the world, saying,

“Angels,—what think you of angels, Great World?”

“Ideas—mere ideas, my good Sir, typical, perfectly typical—morally and anatomically impossible—very pretty fancies though of the old artists and old masters.”

“Yes,—you do well, Wise World, to put your heel upon all such absurd fancies. Crush them—poor pretty painted butterflies, these poetical ideas,—but, ah, they do so much damage!”

Then said I to myself—“Sit thou down here. Tell me, mine heart, of Angels, let us commune of them.” Then it answered, and said unto me, “Angels are.”

Spake I again. “Let us talk of them, tell me, mine heart of *them*.” Then began mine heart, and said.

“There is no living being but hath a

guardian angel; some have many — some but one.

“Think now, and ponder well my words.

“There is one angel that thou may'st remember about thy cradle—singing low sweet songs to thee. Nay, at that angel's knee did'st thou, grown older, lisp thy first prayer. And now that angel whispers to thine heart ‘This is well’ or ‘This is ill done.’ Men call it Conscience, but when that angel walked visibly on earth, thy baby lips used to call it ‘Mother.’

“And there are yet other angels, who guard thy steps through life—some visible, of this world—some invisible, of the other world, and one thou callest ‘Father,’ others ‘Sisters,’ Brethren,’ ‘Friend,’ —all angels!

“And behold, there is still another angel, with clear, earnest, soft eyes, and long dark locks, that make a calm night around your brow when that angel stoops over you to kiss you—and a sweet low voice, and a light fairy form and step—so light, that you know she flies sometimes—she cannot walk so silently and swiftly. And that angel's voice is sweeter even than the voice of Conscience. And she is a visible angel,—and sometimes thou callest it ‘Love;’ but in thy later years, it hath a dearer

name—the dearest name on earth—‘Wife,’ and that angel ever dwelleth with thee, and blesseth thee.

“Perchance, thou hast in after time other angels. Little helpless ones they are, and one of their guardian angels thou art, and the other is thy dearest angel—yet are these angels—called ‘Children,’—true angels to thee—speaking to thee without words and guiding thee.

“But that dearest angel is the light and blessing of thy life, and in thy youth thou dreamest that forget-me-nots first blossomed at her feet, but afterward in thy later thoughts she is crowned with pansies.

“And when thou kneelest down thou prayest God—oh, how earnestly!—that that angel may tarry long with thee on earth, that no fault of thine may cause that she fade away, and leave thee for that bright home in Heaven from which, thou knowest so well, she came down to be the *Life of thy Life*.

“So pray ever, and long may thine angel abide with thee!”

Thus spake my heart to me, in the calm of a summer evening.



FIRE FANCIES.

ONLY a bachelor can tell what a comfort a fire is. As I sit here writing, there the old fellow is in the grate, flickering and flapping up the chimney. They were sensible fellows, those Ghebirs, much better than the worshippers of stocks and stones; and I do not doubt but that the Persian's Worship of the Sun is the same, for he could not, in his hot country, worship a good blazing fire, as the Ghebirs and I do.

A bachelor's life is monotonous of an evening without a fire, he does not know where to sit, he throws himself upon the sofa—there's a draught there, and he will catch cold; he's got no easy chair, and he dare not move the sofa (a lodging-house one) because it has two or three loose castors, which drop off on the slightest movement,


and as fast as he puts one on again, off tumbles another. Who does not know what a "lodging sofa" is?

What is he to do? I don't know: but if there is a fire, what can be "cosier" than to draw three chairs and the little table in front of it, put up his legs on two of the former, and sit propped up with sofa-cushions on the third, while on the latter he puts his coffee, and makes himself comfortable for the evening with his pipe (who, by the bye, is a near relation of fire.)

When a man has no company, Fire creates it. Fire sparkles, and flames, and throws dancing shadows on the walls and ceiling. In the first place, there is one's own shadow—that's always a pleasant companion; Mæcenas thought so, and he was a very clever fellow. Horace says:

"Mæcenas adduxerat umbras."


Some people say "umbræ" are uninvited persons brought by guests, but *I* don't believe it. (Everybody else "conjectures classical readings." Why should not I?) Mæcenas was a rich man, and so he bought two or three shadows—lucky fellow—he



must have got them of some Roman Peter Schlemils—poor fellows, how I pity them!

Well, beside one's own shadow, there's that of the arm-chair. Look up on the ceiling—there it is. It looks like a little merry old man, with his hands on his knees; look how he nods his wicked old head (and, I daresay, winks, only we can't see it), at that prim young lady with the curious head-dress (she's the little table, with the coffee-pot and lamp on it). The shadow of the coal-scuttle is something between a frog, a dog, and a cow's head. There they are, flickering and bobbing on the wall—growing faint, and then bright again all of a sudden, when Fire catches hold of a sly coal in the corner of the grate, and begins to chuckle and splutter over it. Besides affording us this shadowy company (I was going to say *shady* company, but the expression is a dubious one), he's very sociable himself, is Fire; though he has his thoughtful moments too, when he winks and pouts out little globules of gaseous coal, like a baby blowing bubbles with its little fat mouth.

If he gets hold of wood, he makes a fine to-do; he whistles, and crackles, and throws out sparks, and is not altogether such pleasant company as he is when he has coals, though even then, if he finds



a bit of slate or stone among them, he ejects it summarily, with a loud exclamation. He's very pleasant when he gets red and warm, and shoots out his queer-shaped flames, and when the curious smoke goes winding up the chimney, making faces, and rings, and all sorts of shapes. He's facetious, too, for sometimes, when he sees you with your pipe, he begins too, and puffs out a little jet of thick, white smoke, and then he changes it suddenly, with a faint pop, into a jet of bright gas, bringing to our recollection the green-grocers in Tottenham Court Road.

Very often people do not take any notice of him, so, to remind them, every now and then he falls in with a curious rattling crash, and if they don't notice him then, he takes refuge in smoke (like a great many other ill-used bachelors), and departs by the chimney, leaving the cinders to tinkle his knell. But he always brightens up if you "make a stir about him" with the poker.

Sometimes he does not talk at all, but looks at you with his red eyes, and sets you thinking about where the coals come from, and the mines whence was dug the iron for the fender, and the place that the marble mantel-piece came from.

People do not generally treat him well, poor fellow ! Some take the poker and beat him on the head, instead of raising his spirits, by inserting the instrument at the lowest bar. Some, again, will throw ashes upon his head, some smother him with coals, or stint him in fuel ; and " oh, the most unkindest cut of all ! " some even go so far as to squeeze him between two bricks, or, by having false sides, make the *grate smaller*. Poor fellow ! then he looks anything but a " feu de joie ; " he is as miserable as he well can be, and shrinks into the background ; but give him room, and fuel, and how much better he looks. By the bye, there *must* be some connection between coals and the Latin " colo —to nourish," and " coalitus—friendship."

A-propos of Latin, the ancients had a higher respect for Fire than we have. Witness Vesta and Hephaistos ; besides, do not the Greeks call Fire " pur," which is the same as " pure," no doubt. Prometheus, again—what was he chained and vulturized for ? For stealing Fire from Olympus ; and his punishment was to be fixed upon the snowy cold top of a mountain. Old Zeus wanted to keep the invention to himself !

Men say that Fire's " a good servant, but a bad master." I think he's best as a friend. Picture

to yourself a woody plain in some foreign land, resounding with the roar of the lion and his mate. There's a man there, who is comfortably lying down to sleep. Who is going to watch and defend him? Fire. There's a great bonfire at his side, and Sir Lion paces round, at a respectful distance, and licks his lips, and growls and grumbles at the fire. He dare not come near, so old Ignis chuckles, and crackles, and winks at him till daylight.

Long ago, Fire used to sleep on the tops of hills and castles, ready to wake up at any moment, and tell all around that the enemy was approaching. But now he has left his war-mission at the beacon; he comes and sits and babbles to us, like an old grandfather, of what our fathers did in the times when he was a "Need-fire."

Hollo! the fire's going out; I must revive it. Oh, bachelors! who of you knows not of the newspaper plan? If none, then hearken. I rush to the sideboard, seize the yesterday's "Times," and hold it across the fire-place, so as to stop up every part except the bottom of the grate; then I put the door open.

Presently, Fire begins to blink and hum to himself—then he talks louder—the shadows of the bars appear and disappear through the paper—he

shouts—and then fairly roaring, he blazes away better than ever.

“Who would not be
A Salamander,
In fires to wander,
To dwell in the holes
Of bright red coals;
Living in state
In a grate?”

What a glorious life that of a cricket must be, though he only lives near a grate ; but if there were such a thing as a Salamander, oh ! should not I like the situation !

It's my firm belief the Monument was not built for the purpose which Fire's traducers assign to it. It *must* have been erected by a society of old bachelors, who put that tassel-like bunch of flames on the top to show their gratitude to their friend—their old, true—and sometimes only—friend ; who would share their lodging with them, and carry comfort, and happiness, and warmth everywhere in his jolly, rosy face.

THE VOICE OF THE STARS.

Oh, ye silver stars of night,
Gentle, loving eyes of Heaven!
Tell me,—in your steadfast light
What the lesson given?
From the Evening's silent close,
When the day, in Western skies,
Flushes ruddy as the rose,
Gleam ye, tender eyes,
Till the Morn, with modest grace,
Rises o'er the purple hills,
Blushing at her lovely face
Mirror'd in the rills!

Never, sure, such radiance bright
Was revealed to Man for naught:
In your ever-watchful light
What the lesson taught?

From the depths of Heaven afar
Was the whispered answer borne,—
"As each silent vigil-star,
Watch ye for The Morn!"

HOW CHRISTMAS CAME ON IMPERCEPTIBLY.

“‘I’m coming,’—‘And so’s Christmas.’”

VULGAR REPARTÉE.

CHRISTMAS had been coming on slowly, surely, and silently. Nobody noticed its approach particularly, it was so gradual.

At last—towards the end of the year—the lamps seemed to burn brighter, and shop windows began to glitter more than usual. Dwellers near the London cattle-markets noticed the increased lowing of oxen, and bleating of sheep, and the louder pattering and clattering of horny hoofs.

Soon wizened, sour old bachelors, who had no homes and friends, (“and it is their own fault too with their crabbed ways,” remarks Miss Woudwed), they, I say, savagely heard clean, rosy mechanics, and

their, if possible, cleaner and rosier wives, wishing "Merry Christmas," to departing friends at the stations of that cockney little line of railway, that leaves London at Camden Town, and whirls on suburbanly through Islington and Hackney, until it gets frightened at the sight of real fields, and trees that are green—not brown, and so rushes back again, with an indignant snort and a yell, into the very heart of the city, with its smoke, and its bustle and clamour.

People on greater railways—Great Northerns, Southern, Easterns, and Westerns—begin to carry more than the permitted number of parcels and packages. Luggage trains become peopled with hares and pheasants, and redolent of oysters, barrels of which, piled up in the van, with a guard, lantern in hand, inspecting them, make one believe in these steamy days there is no time for anything, so that the forthcoming Pantomime of "Harlequin, Fizz! Pop! Bang! or Guy Faux and the Island of Gunpowder!" is obliged to be rehearsed by rail! The trains lengthen, until idle butcher boys, who lean over bridges counting the carriages, are taken out of their depth in numeration.

Suburban villas—or at least the dwellers therein—are terrified at beholding swarthy ruffians

strolling about the neighbourhood—ostensibly for the purpose of gathering holly and misletoe, but not averse to silver spoons, or even to insecure shutters—nay, not unconscious of the art of garotte.

Holly and misletoe begin to sprout out in shop windows. Nodding Chinese ladies, at grocers', hold bowpots of them in their hands, and idiotically-servile Mandarins are for-ever bobbing their noses into huge green bunches in their breasts.

Housekeepers, on beholding these omens, begin to rout out rare receipts for making plum-puddings and mince-pies; and schoolboys begin to think of eating them. Perhaps, while being taught "the use of the globes," some hapless urchin beholds the terrestrial sphere turned by fancy into a brown speckled pudding, surrounded by supernatural blue flames, and crowned with a sprig of spectral holly! But such flights of fancy are regarded by the pedagogue as absurd, and punished accordingly.

Now, as the time draws nearer, the children of the house begin to loiter round a certain locked room-door, through which papa and mamma frequently disappear, laden with paper parcels, but return always empty-handed. They peep in at the key-hole, through which the second boy, aided by a

powerful imagination, and a slight squint, vows he can discern the branches of a fir tree !

Later on, postmen begin to deliver extra quantities of letters, and get bland, polite, and patient, beholding a dim boxing-night looming in the distance.

For a long time past, cold clarionets, aguish violins, and cornets with bad coughs, have moaned "melancholy o' nights."

Now shops blaze with new toys—new knickknacks—new dresses—new books—new everything, all labelled—"Christmas Presents !"

Property men at the theatres, with their painters and carpenters, are hard at work, day and night, framing Palaces of Dazzling Light—Regions of Revolving Radiance—or Halls of Magic Mirrors in the Kingdom of Fairyland, (of course, overflowing with capitals) out of wood, canvas, glaring pigments, dutch metal, tin, tinsel, and tawdry rags.

As nearer and nearer comes the day, the carcasses of mighty Bulls of Basan, beribboned, and bestuck with evergreens, hang in butchers' shops, where the flaring gas-jets are whistling and whooping with the gaiety of the season.

In snow-sprinkled country homesteads and yards, families of turkeylings are bewailing, with

harsh and discordant clamors, the abduction of the parent bird; and whole flocks of geese melt like snow-drifts!

Everybody glows and glitters with the genial Christmas light—a lingering spark of that mysterious star that long ago stood still over Bethlehem!

Holly carts, and donkeys laden with lip-delighting misletoe, stand at every corner: cab-horses carry red berries in lieu of mangy rosettes: merry voices, speaking “good will,” float upon the frosty, exhilarating air, like bead-bubbles in a glowing bowl of punch.

Christmas is breaking out in every place—parasitic misletoe attaches itself to beams in dusky passages, and doorways. The wanderer through the streets at evening sees in cosy drawing-rooms the picture-frames and looking-glass adorned with evergreens: and the dim music of the devotional organ, upon “the day which the Lord hath made,” when it chaunts in deep tones, “let us rejoice and be glad therein,” makes a tremulous murmur through the boughs of ivy, and laurel, and holly, in the church, that reminds them of the day when they had so quivered to the breath of spring.

And so, gathering strength like an avalanche, the

time of this blessed season draws near—but how can I describe this unseen—this imperceptible approach of Christmas—in fitting terms?

Have you ever heard a band in the distance—its music at first faint, tremulous, and low, dependant upon the wafting of the wind, but soon—gradually approaching—growing more distinct—louder—and louder yet—until, with a sudden burst, and a peal of merry minstrelsy, it stands beneath your window in the fresh, frosty air?

Thus comes Christmas—gradually drawing ever nearer, and nearer to us—from the first hint at holly to the appearance of roast beef and plum-pudding at the feast—until the grand finale—the closing crash of the Great Christmas Concert—the concluding chorus of the programme of the year's performance!

The general—the universal music of this merry Christmas Time rolls up to Heaven, from the organ pipes of a thousand smoking chimneys, that tell of joints roasting at roaring fires, and puddings knocking at pot-lids, and crying out, like Sterne's starling—(what a glorious sight is the smoke curling up through the clear, frosty atmosphere—telling of life, like one's breath in the wintry air),—up rolls the music from the church towers, and spires, where the

bells are reeling, and jostling, and clanging, to the alarm of the belfry jackdaws—from the voices, beneath frost-fretted windows, chanting tidings of “Peace on earth”—from the little robin, who pipes and trills in the naked trees, like a chorister boy, with a red comforter, who has mislaid his surplice—from the eyes and hearts of the poor and needy, clothed, fed, and warmed by Christmas Charity—from the merry laughter of children over their gifts—from every warm breast—from every thankful lip—from every grateful look—in every hall, and homestead, and hut, throughout the length and breadth of the land,—goes up that universal burst of music, whose chorus is, “A Merry Christmas to us all, and a Happy New Year when the time comes!”

LIFE, AN ILIAD; AND OTHER THINGS.

“Ἔπεα πτερόεντα.”

HOMER.

“Epics light as a feather.”

SEE LIDDELL AND SCOTT.

“FRIEND Bob,” said I to my old chum, as we sat in two easy chairs, one on each side of the fire, puffing out clouds of smoke at one another, like Uncle Toby and the dear old Corporal. “Friend Bob, I want to write an epic—I want to write some long poem, that will have a chance of scrambling out of this generation into the next—that my grandchildren may look at on their shelves with pride—not as an obsolete—not as a rare impression of an extinct publication.”

“My dear boy,” said Bob, “how many epics

have we? How many long poems have managed to scramble over the intervening centuries to this present time?"

As it did not suit my purpose to answer this question, I replied only by laboriously and studiously rolling a volume of smoke out of my mouth, and watching its evolutions, as it loitered over to the fire-place, where the draught caught it and whirled it up the chimney.

"Take my advice, and be content with writing shorter pieces—not that I quite approve of a mere desire for immortality—the immortality of earth, which lasts, perhaps, a couple of centuries.—You remember Denon's speech to Napoleon. And yet I do not know—perhaps such a desire is pardonable, after all—

♦
'Gloria, magnanimi quæ pectoris ultimus error!'

as some one has beautifully translated 'the last infirmity of noble minds.' Still, believe me, the poet's real task is somewhat nobler; you have a higher mission—a more glorious calling, my dear boy! You know what the great American poet says:

'God sent his singers upon earth.'

for a nobler purpose than this ! They are sent 'to charm, to strengthen, and to teach ;' which ends are, perhaps, better attained by people-songs than by epics. Moreover, in only 'the immortal' point of view, a splinter of diamond is just as indestructible as the Koh-i-noor itself—nay, the Mountain of Light would be more marketable and useful, were it divided into mounds of light. Milton's great poem would be much more readable if it were separated into episodes."—

Bob looked me straight in the face.

"Lay your hand on your heart, Sir, and tell me candidly if you ever read 'Paradise Lost' from beginning to end—'from title page to closing line ?' "

"I have!" I said, fulfilling the conditions, "I have!" and I thanked my stars that Dr. Spatala had, in days bygone, insisted upon his pupils' reading Milton for an hour before breakfast every morning.

"I will not ask you how you liked it," said Bob, "for if you say you did *not*, I shall be bound, by the laws of worldly conventionality, to call you a heathen, and if you say you *did*, I grieve to say that I fear—I shall hardly be able to believe you!"

“Humph!” was my remark—(but I shall not satisfy morbid curiosity by divulging what my answer would have been, had I been compelled to give a decided response).

“Besides,” he continued, “what topic can you find for an epic? Of course it would not be a stale old romance dished up again—a ‘funeral baked meat’ curried to suit the ‘wedding feast’ of To-day. What can you make an Iliad of? The Siege of Sebastopol, eh?”

‘The Russian’s greed, to Turkey direful spring
Of woes unnumbered, heavenly goddess, sing!’

Pshaw! what can you make an Iliad of, now?”

“Life, Bob, Life!” said I, feeling I had got a topic, on which I could enlarge, with credit, for hours, “Life is an Iliad! We are all trying to win Troy! All the world sits down before the walls of Ilium—each for a separate purpose.

“To the old-world campaign, Menelaus went for his wife (by the bye, I have always thought him a blockhead for his pains, and the old tragedians and poets seem to have been of the same opinion, from their pictures of him). Agamemnon went, partly to oblige his brother, but more to satisfy his own

ambition to become a great man—a ‘leader of the people.’ Achilles went to break heads—for the pure sake of fighting, to cut, slash, and hack other heroes. Ulysses went to fill his pockets with spoil (Palamedes whispers, ‘even at the expense of his friends.’) Thersites went to sneer at all these mites struggling in a mouldy cheese.

“To the new-world campaign come the modern versions of these heroes. Menelaus Flutter, empty-headed fool, starts his four-in-hand, and dangles away his life at *soirées*, and at operas (which he does not understand) all to gain his ideal Troy—a wife ! And he does get one—‘for better or worse’—it’s no business of ours which !

“Agamemnon Smith fights and battles to make himself universally agreeable, and goes, in agony and tight boots, to heavy dinners, in order to become a leader of *ton*.

“Achilles Flambeau kicks and struggles—thumps and elbows all men in his reach, from mere pug-nacity : he bullies the Club-waiter, *par exemple*, because his steak is ‘underdone,’ ‘overdone,’—‘done at all,’ in fact ; anything for a row ! His ambition is only to break heads—aye, and hearts, too, for the matter of that !

“Ulysses Gruvel lies and truckles—and fights

too, if need be—for gold : and we can find plenty of Palamedeses, who will whisper about him to us.

“Thersites Carper grins at, sneers at, and gloats over the mites in the mouldy cheese of Now—the mites that are fighting, not as they did in the old Troy, with sword, and spear, and helm, but as they do in the new Troy—in Troynovant—with blue-books, and hypocrisy, and hustings’-abuse—and bribery at the foot of the hustings !

“All these men fight thus—yea, and a thousand others ! Do you not notice that Homer only speaks of the battles of the heroes, and not of the common troops ? And yet they must have been there fighting too : sometimes he does drag in one or two miserable *idiotæ*—private soldiers ! What for ? Why, that the god-like Achilles may crack their common crowns, or poke his spear into their plebeian entrails ! Yet were there hundreds of these poor fellows doing their work bravely, unchronicled heroes—hewing, slashing, and slashed—shouting, cheering, and groaning ! But, if he brings you in a man from the ranks, and gives his birthplace, and parentage, it is only that, within the next ten lines, the mighty son of Peleus may hurl his ‘long-shadowed’ javelin at him, and that Black Death,

with a variety of epithets and figures of speech, may descend upon his eyelids, and so he may be annihilated, or 'rubbed out,' as the American trapper calls it. (By the bye, this trait of Homer's is like the failing common to the 'Blood-thirsty Sparrow,' and all other Indian Chiefs, who sing the brave deeds, and genealogies of the owners of the scalps, which adorn their tent-poles ; yet, had the *ci-devant* owners of those shrivelled scraps of hair-hung epidermis not come beneath the edge of the knife, and given up their top-knots, nobody would have known of their bravery, or heard of their descent !)

“What do we see in the Iliad of Nowadays ?

“Something sadly like this ! We all hear how Swift behaved to poor Stella, or still poorer Vanessa. We know all about his stabs, and slashes, and savageries. But (except when one of them gets an unenviable mention in the Police Reports) we do not know how many Irishmen—Pat, and Teague, and Murphy Swifts—are stabbing, and kicking, and slashing (daily in the slums and bye-lanes of New Troy) Stellas and Vanessas, who are called Bet, and Peg, and Molly—rude names, but poor fond women nevertheless !

“We hear all about Dicky Steele—about his



lurking in secret to avoid the bailiffian eye. We know how he wrote to 'Dear Prue,' saying, 'Shall lie this night at a baker's—one Leg,'—poor Leg, an *idiot* (that is, of course, classically speaking—a private soldier), merely brought forward in the Iliad of Life Chronicled because one of the heroes lodged with him one night, and did not (if we know Dick Steele aright) pay him,—'At a baker's—one Leg—over against the Devil Tavern at Charing Cross.' We do not know how many Browns and Joneses dodge bailiffs in Troynovant alleys—how many, not only go to the baker's near the Devil Tavern, but go to the devil altogether—utterly and entirely—poor, nameless, fameless *idiote*!

"We all of us have read how, in Great Battles, Great Lords and Great Captains have done Great Things—how they rushed up boldly into the red jaws of batteries, and got medalled and laured accordingly.

"Have we heard how Bill Robinson, the private, galloped on in the same charge with his Lordship—bold, fearless, unflinching? Bill, who has a poor mother, mayhap a wife and children, dependant upon his one life!

"If we hear of Robinson at all, it is to the effect that when 'the noble Lord had a wonderful escape,'

and the bullet, which passed through his Lordship's coat-tail (without injuring him), glanced off the saddle, on which his Lordship sat, it killed 'a private, of the name of Robinson, who was a few paces behind his Lordship.' Or if Robinson is not shot, the most we hear about him is that Dukes, Lords, and Baronets (names given in a list) present him with a bottle of champagne, to be shared with his left and right-hand man!

"We have heard, all of us, about the great men who have risen from poverty. We know that the 'Great A' was a barefoot boy on Blackfriars Bridge, and rose by his own exertions. We know, too, that 'Bouncing Big B' was originally a clerk in a counting-house, and became in time a self-made millionaire.

"But where is the record of the 'little a's,' that were barefoot boys on all the bridges in Troynovant, and didn't (and couldn't) rise by their own exertions, and were not raised by anybody else's, but died, struggling, starving?

"What do we know of the 'little b's' (and 'busy' ones too, good Doctor Watts) who were—and are—and always will be—clerks in counting-houses, worthy and talented men though they be!

"Pshaw—Talent!—Genius!" here I went off at

a tangent, and talked about what had nothing to do with the question; "Why, with the generality of men, and their institutions, you might as well wrap up your talent in a napkin, and bury it in your back-garden, or your dust-bin, as carry it about with you in the pocket of a patched pair of breeches, or of a coat out at elbows!"

This (as I have stated) having nothing to do with the subject, I stopped, and judiciously re-engrafted the original thread of the discourse by means of two or three whiffs at my pipe. Then I resumed my speech:

"Epics, we are taught, begin in the middle of the story, the real commencement being dove-tailed in—related by some one or other of the characters. Heaven help us! In this, too, Life is an Iliad—an epic. We have Æneases *ad nauseam*, prosy, bespectacled, and snuffy, who are always droning to us of the past, like overcharged bagpipes—not to mention that absurd Young England, mewling and prattling its nursery rhymes of 'Once upon a time!' Fool! 'Once upon a time,' says the fairy legend, 'there was a handsome young prince,' but there was also a wicked ogre—and an iniquitous magician; so in your 'Once on a time!' if there were gentle troubadours, and sweet ladies, and

noble knights, were there not also Bigotry, and Oppression, and Ignorance ?

“This by way of parenthesis—to return to our subject—is not the Past, the beginning of the Present Epic, Life ? Is it not repeated and echoed to us by Memory and History ?

“Are not you and I, Bob, each of us, taking part in the great Iliad ? Are not our lives episodes in the great Poem ?”

Bob ruthlessly interrupted me :

“And which have you most interest in—the whole or the part ? Would you wish to be dragged on the stage to be immediately wiped out by the great Achilles, or would you prefer being the humble hero of a bucolic—a Daphnis or Melibœus—pipes (oaten ones more especially, not clay), and content ? Your ambition for immortality ought to lead you to prefer the former alternative: for myself, give me Daphnidom, and obscurity, in preference to a mention in the Iliad, and a foot of cold bronze (steel was not known in those days) through my diaphragm.

“Moreover, *à-propos* of your subject: though the ‘Great A’s’ and ‘B’s’—Flutters and Flambeaus—of this day, are, in a way, reiterations of Homeric Braves, still they are hardly adapted for poetry. Like the

town on the Brundisian Road, whose name Horace could, by no artifice, coax into hexameters, they can only be spoken of in 'synonomial circumlocutions,' which would be something like the play of 'Hamlet, Prince of Denmark,' with the rôle of Hamlet left out.

"No! You cannot talk of Smithers and Withers doing battle against Higgle, Wriggle, Niggle, and Co. with ledgers and double entry: or of the heroic Podgers warding off a bill at three months: or of Dodgers slipping away from a bailiff.

"The old poet had the advantage of you.

"He could picture Achilles and Hector at it, hammer and tongs, with javelin and falchion: or Ajax, with the 'sevenfold shield,' warding off the arrows of the Cretan archers: or Paris retreating before the Phthiot squadrons.

"If the old poet got his hero into an apparently hopeless fix, he had only to think of a god, whose name would suit the metre, and straightway you read that Apollo, or Hermes, or some other deity, wraps my gentleman up in a cloud, and whips him out of harm's way!

"Now if *you*, on the other hand, let poor Stodgers fall into the hands of X. 23, or any other blue-coated Myrmidon, Apollo cannot interfere—

'nec deus intersit'—because he would be haled off to the station-house for 'obstructing the Police in the discharge of their duty.'

"Do you think Inspector Nabham would hesitate about taking Mercury into custody, if he caught him at a larceny? Why, if Mercury showed his talaria—his ankle-wings—as the proof of his divinity, Nabham would only remark that he '*has* met with rogues who showed him a cleaner pair of heels!'

"Depend upon it, my boy, that, although the abstract subject be the same, the clothing of it very materially alters its applicability to poetry. Byron could write splendidly on the Dying Gladiator; but dress him up in the costume of the ring, and call him 'the Elastic Potboy, as he appeared when floored by the Birmingham Pet,' and even Byron could not versify him.

"What more beautiful subject is there than a fountain, the emblem of perpetual youth, and happiness, and song? Yet what can you do with a Trafalgar Square ginger-beer bottle?

"A fountain in London, on a wet day, is the supreme, and perfect picture of misery! Draggled cabs, ragged urchins, mud, umbrellas, and a lead-coloured sky, the perpetual dribbling and hissing of

the rain, and the roaring of the refuse-dam'd kennels are not poetical. Still less so the sound of that water-spouting monstrosity (whose stream does not appear even distantly connected with the living, liquid crystal of summer brooks), piling up, laboriously and unceasingly, a whitey-brown, leaden-shadowed uprightness, like a ricketty clothes-prop, and then flopping—yes 'flopping,' is the only word that adequately expresses it—flopping back into the tank below; sooty, slimy water, which, when it lies in that tank, has a film and a scurf floating on it, and an oily, prismatic glare, as if the never-ceasing November rains had washed the colour out of a stray rainbow, whose hues had got smoky, and grimy, and defaced, by vainly hanging out a bow of promise over a hopeless, moiling, earthy, soulless city of Mammon!

“But in other things, too, had the old Bards the advantage of you! Halting Tyrtæus, when he stood thrumming on his fiducle in the market-place of Lacedæmon, was better off than you are in these Pica and Crown Octavo days.

“The *Vates* is a prophet as well as a bard, and old Tyrtæus, as he limped about the Spartan streets, like a halt sparrow, prophesied the overthrow of

the Messenians, which foresaying proved, in time, true!

“But in your case! You write a spirit-stirring prediction, during the wars of New Troy, full of ‘victorious peace, glorious successes, and trampled enemies:’ but before you have corrected the proofs—perchance while the book is at the binders—the wounds of the nations are bandaged with red tape, and there are no victories, and by no means such a peace as you foretold—for, if there be any one trampled, it is not the enemy!

“So your soothsay, when it is published, falls flat—a prophecy not exactly unfulfilled—worse than that—one, whose diametrical opposite is fulfilled! Old Hop-and-go-one of Laconia was better off than you, in spite of Pica and Steam-presses!

“By the way—that reminds me! Is Homer’s ‘Iliad’ an epic—nay, rather is it Homer’s? It took many ephahs to make a homer among the Hebrews, but, my friend, how many ballad-singers went to the Greek Homer?

“In the absence, not only of Pica and Press, but even of Pen and Pencil—nay, of Alphabet—how could any man, with forty-horse mnemonic power, remember the whole of that lengthy ‘Iliad’ with an

'Odyssey' thrown in as a make weight? May not these epics have been a collection of ballads strung together like the Robin Hood ones of our country? So that, after all, that sublime, calm, grand, bust of Homer, which we know so well, is only an ideal, typical of genius,—blind—because it looked not at the things of this world: so that all the places, which laid claim to his birth, from Chios to Colophon, have each perhaps an equal right to him; he—that is the poems—having been born piecemeal in their respective streets. Or, possibly, from each claimant city sprung one of the balladists, whose songs jointly formed the 'Iliad,' and each one (as is in human nature) thinking the bit he contributed to be the gem of the whole, said, 'I am Homer—Homer is my *nom de plume*!' and his native city, (as is also in human nature, seeing that it was to its advantage to do so) believed him!

"Perchance the man, who has most right to the title, is the illustrious Catnatch of antiquity (anti-type of him of Seven Dials) Peisistratus, who first compiled, edited, and published these 'disjecta membra,' of a good many 'poetæ'!

"All this," said I, glad to have an opportunity of catching Bob tripping, (a gladness only too common

among us Christians) "all this has nothing to do with epics! If Homer never was, and if the 'Iliad' is not one poem but an Achillaic garland; at least, you will allow that there *did* exist such an individual as Milton: also that Virgil was a single being and not a Joint-Stock Company of Augustus-flatterers and toadies. Nay—I submit that as it stands;—no matter how—when—or where composed (if you prefer that to 'written,' in the absence of A.B.C.), the 'Iliad' is an epic—a whole epic—and nothing but an epic!"

"It's my turn to pull *you* up on your haunches now, my boy!" broke in Bob, "I admit epic-existence, and will allow the 'Iliad' (supposing it composed according to my theory) to be nevertheless an epic—under protest; for we will argue that some other day.

"What I wished to impress upon you was, that ballads were as lasting as epics. Take my advice, be content with something less than an epic write 'Finis' before you have got to the hundred and fiftieth line. Choose a good, wise, useful subject 'to charm, to strengthen, or to teach.' Write carefully—correct carefully—compose musically—and above all—don't be maudlin!"

"What unbeliever!" I interposed, quoting from a

favourite author, "will you not allow that the tone, the nearest approaching to the beautiful in poetry is sadness?"

"Granted!" said Bob, "Sadness *is*! But this is no reason why all the young would-be poets of the day should turn down their collars, and get their hearts broken, as a prelude to setting up as versifiers. That this is so, witness the Domestic Pursuivant—the verses sent by its numerous correspondents—are, to be sure, most of them rejected—but still their very titles are morbid melancholy ones, and if by chance a poem does get in, it is not healthy, and vigorous, but peevish, and miserable.

"Sadness—when you *do* write sadness—which, although a high tone of poetry, is not the only one—should be an atmosphere, an undercurrent only.

"How would you describe a sunset best?"

"Not by talking about 'glowing orb,' 'expiring rays,' 'purple cloud-canopies,' and such like; but by letting us catch, accidentally as it were, its blazoning on the tops of the trees—its gold in the atmosphere—its reflex on a beautiful face that is gazing over the waves, which must not glitter, and glare too much in your verse, or it dazzles only, and is a failure!"

“So the sadness must be more hinted at than expressed—must be a gauze veil—must be a general tint! One thing it must *not* be! It must not be the ‘boo-hooing’ sorrow of a spoilt child over its broken drum—the sort of sorrow, in which most young rhymers delight to indulge.

“But worst of all, this blaring sorrow is that egotistical misery, that parading its unhappinesses before all eyes, cries aloud, ‘Ah me!’ and ‘Poor me!’ and ‘Ain’t I just a victim!’

“Job sat on his ashes and sackcloth, and scraped his bodily sores in an inobtrusive manner, with a potsherd.

“But one of our poets (and a great one too), finding his mental boils more than he could patiently bear, scraped himself down with a Giaour, or a misanthropical Childe Harold, and then handed it round for inspection!

“Now Job’s potsherd may have bit of real Sèvres—a fragment of Mrs. Job’s best dessert-service—still we do not want it thrust into our faces, after being used as a strigil!

“Such sweet touches of true poetry as those which paint the mystically beautiful appearance of a beloved face after death—

“Before decay’s effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,”

Such sweet touches, I say, are themselves too beautiful for effacement—not meant to be soiled and defiled by a scowling, unchristianly Caloyer, neither do we want, when revelling in the lovely scenery of the Pilgrimage, to find a soured, unbelieving, Harold at our elbows to remind us, in his own person, that Earth, amid all her beauties and grandeurs, has blots and boils too!”

“This,” I exclaimed, “surely this, Bob, is an argument, in favour of epics! If I am suffering from moral elephantiasis, or mental leprosy, I cannot easily make it obtrusive in an epic! It may be the fact of epics being so totally separated from self that makes them immortal—”

“*Halte là!*” shouted Bob. “Before you draw your conclusions, allow me to question the premiss. Are epics *par excellence* the Immortal? Are they more so than other poems? I think not! All the Cyclic epics have gone to Hades, and hosts of sickly, abortive, since-then, Iliads and Odysseys, have likewise ‘gone the way of all—lead!’

“Why, we have poems, not epic, which have

co-existed with the epics, nay, outlasted many ! Witness Homer's Hymn to Aphrodite : look at the Bucolics and Georgics—redolent of fragrant vineyards—breathing of fresh-mown hay, humming with immortal bees ! Did Virgil ever think of burning these ? But he did order his executors to burn the *Æneid* :—(and how heartily I wished they had, when I was at school !)

“ Think of Milton's sonnets—will not they be as lasting as his epics ? I confess I am bad-tasted enough to prefer them.

“ Besides, there is a theory of mine (on which I shall write an essay some day), that Nursery Rhymes are the oldest poems extant ! We know that Nursery Legends are world-wide—universal ! Cinderella existed in China long before we ever set foot there—a war-painted, scalp-locked, moccasin'd Jack the Giant-Killer existed among the American Indians before Columbus was born—and for all we know, Puss in Boots may be a tradition of centuries in Dahomey. These must have existed before the Dispersion, whence each nation carried away the legends among its penates. If this be true, (and if I had time I could prove it better) then it is no very wild idea to imagine that the rhymes were contemporary. The world, in its young days, required

Nursery Rhymes and Stories. So that Nimrod's wife may be, for all we know to the contrary, the authoress of

“Bye, baby bunting,
Daddy's gone a-hunting!”

From what nation on earth, I ask you, except the tree-inhabiting African tribes, can that other lullaby, ‘hush a bye baby, on the tree top,’ emanate?

“I endeavoured, while the Queen of Oude was at Southampton, to get an audience, in order to inquire if she were acquainted with ‘Humpty Dumpty:’ I believe she would have replied in the affirmative.

“As for the Old Lady and her Steed, at Banbury Cross, the cock-horse, on which we are invited to go and behold the spectacle, is no other than the hippalectryon of the Greeks!”

“What might be the Greek for Banbury Cross?” inquired I.

But Bob was prepared:

“Oh! simple enough! The ferry to Pandataria, an island in the Tyrrhene Sea. So now, my dear boy, you see, if you write a good ‘lullaby,’ it is

just as likely—(more, perhaps)—to be immortal as the best epic you ever read.

“Of course, your nursery rhyme even must be perfect. After all, perfection is that which makes a poem immortal.”

“Bob!” said I, seriously, “you can’t attain at perfection; nothing human is perfect!”

“I allow the truth of your novel and brilliant observation,” he answered. “But the nearer you get to perfection the better. Like the mathematical case of asymptotes, in which one line is always approaching another, but can never meet it, you can draw ever nearer and nearer to perfection, so that it is an infinitely small fraction only that divides you from it; nay—they tell us that in an *infinite* distance asymptotes will meet—perfection comes some day! Aim at perfection! ‘You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear,’ says Proverbial Philosophy. Vulgar Proverbial Philosophy has a great inclination to let things alone—has a conservative respect for old institutions, of which itself is one!—a ‘Let well (and that well often an ill) alone’ principle!

“Now, I allow that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear—although even that is a bold concession, in these days, when they make sugar

out of beet-root, and linen rags, and paper of straw—why not silk of bristles? But even supposing you cannot—try, nevertheless! If you don't make a *silk* purse, you may contrive something that will hold your money quite as well, and, may be, will last as long, if not longer.

“ Aim, I repeat, at perfection—especially in all the details; if every little cube is perfect, you will make a perfect mosaic picture. Did you ever look over Retsch's outlines? I now recall, in his ‘Knight and the Dragon,’ two pictures, which will exemplify what I mean. One is where Gozon, the Chevalier of Malta, is dismissed by the Grand Master for disobedience: the plate immediately following, represents what happens about two minutes afterwards—the Grand Master recalling Gozon before he has quitted the Hall.

“ In these two pictures, the Hall is crowded with spectators, yet in the second you see a most perfect and delicate photograph of the first. You can swear to every man in the crowd—their actions only a little varied, since the last picture—their countenances expressive of the alteration of circumstances! There they are, every one of them, from the Knight, in the right-hand corner, to the knave with his legs dangling over the edge of the gallery,

in the background. This gives that impression of Reality, which brings the work of Art nearer to Truth, and consequently to Perfection. This care in details—this approach to the Real—is what strikes me as the most beautiful point in one of the poems lately come before the world.

“In the commencement of it, the poet brings before us the village, around which the scenery of the opening of the poem is laid—the moor beyond, the wood close at hand, with a tragical ‘red-ribbed hollow’ behind it. ‘The turrets of the old Manorial Hall,’ in the midst of the lawns, and the cedar-grove, can spy in the distance the ‘cotton-spun’ castle of the *parvenu*, encircled by its new fir-plantation, breaking the horizon of the purple moor. Through the Manor gardens, past its roses, and lilies, and passion-flowers—past its old carved gateway, with a grim, rampant lion on the top, a rivulet tinkles ; and hurries on still through meadows, where a path is marked in rosy-lipt daisies—past a solitary home, that stands out, clearly defined, against the dark hollow—past the wood, where a ‘myriad lilies blow together’ over the moor—to the sea, which lies beyond—the sea, that throughout the whole poem murmurs in the distance—is ever dimly present, like the vague

sadness which, even in the lover's happiest moments, is a prophetic 'dark under-current woe, that seems to draw!'

"Here you have the whole scene, all the neighbourhood of the poem. It is real and life-like—so real and life-like, that the poet's soul, as he still writes on, wanders in it as in an actual country, and so sometimes he says, 'Hark to the whisper of the sea,'—'the enchanted moan—the swell of the long wave, that rolls in yonder bay:' and anon, when the storm awakes, he bids you listen to 'the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave.' We go with him to gather lilies of the valley in the wood; and afterwards, when the scene lies at the Solitary Home, or at the Manor-House; through the laurels, or between the cedar-boles, we catch a peep of that same wood—'the wood that is dearer than all.'

"We glimpse the moor, too, often, and we learn all the turns and terraces of Maud's parterre.

"This exquisite care in detail—this word-præ-Raphaelitism, has brought the poem so close to the Real Fact, that we cannot but admire it, unconsciously admiring the truthfulness. When you are intent on the description of some fresh spot near the village, you say to yourself—'surely I should

see the wood from here !' and so you do—in the next few lines it is pointed out. Or you murmur— 'this stream must pass the Solitary Home on its way to the sea !' and then a rose goes dancing down its waters, to lead you down all the windings of the brook to the Solitary Home, and then, having completed its errand so far as concerns you, it eddies and whirls at the head of a fall, having to take a message to some one else.

“ Speaking of this poem reminds me of another precept.

“ ‘ Be bold, be bold, but not too bold !’ said the inscription in the fairy tale. Some things may be true and real and yet are no more fitted for poetry than the before-mentioned ledgers of Smithers or Higgle.

“ A madman—even though love drove him mad—can hardly rave poetically, at least it is a dangerous attempt to try to put him into a metre straight-jacket, and not wise to attempt to beautify his wisps of straw in verse. This is one of the—not many—faults of the poem I am speaking of, so beautiful as a whole, if you read and understand it. I do not think it absolutely necessary, as some uphold, that a poem should be legible to those ‘ who run.’ Why should they run and read? They have not discovered perpetual motion—they must stand

still occasionally : let them read *then!* I think, if you try to run and read simultaneously, you may knock your head against a wall, or break your shins (if not your neck) over a protruding paving stone.

“I said just now, that a man, driven mad with love, is not adapted for poetry : a lesser development of the same insanity lies under the same restrictions. *I* know, and *you* know (at least, if I judge rightly of your relations with the charming Arabella) how absurdly mad a lover is for a time after he has been accepted! What absurd—what ridiculous things did you not say to yourself on that occasion! Ridiculous to others—to yourself how sincere, and full of meaning, feeling, and truth! Still you would hardly have sat down and committed your thoughts to paper then—if you had, you would have committed (yourself too—besides) many wild extravagancies.

“The hero of the poem I speak of, in his mad rapture, goes so far with high-flown and ludicrous (but still, under the circumstances, natural) rhapsody, that he positively makes his betrothal a sort of moral Baby-jumper for a Red Indian Squaw, ‘beyond the sea!’ Do not ride Pegasus too high, or you’ll get a Bellerophontic tumble for your pains!

“Another hint for you! Don’t be in too great a

hurry—keep your production by you for a season, and look it over at intervals. If it smells of the midnight oil, what harm? Better to do that than wrap up butter—better to send it out polished, and finished, than crude and imperfect. I remember once having a mania for modelling, but my Impatience always opened the moulds, before my Prudence told me that the plaster was set—so that the Apollo I had fashioned and moulded with such care, came out an indistinguishable white pap! Who knows what Apellie master-pieces they might have been but for my disastrous haste?”

“But in cases, Bob, such as you spoke of at first,” said I, “where the prophecy of the Vates may be a dead failure, if not uttered at the moment?”

“Such writing,” he replied, “is a mere lottery. It is like smuggling; if the smuggler runs one cargo safely out of six, he makes an immense profit, besides repaying the loss of the five, (or used to do so, for smuggling days are over—would that the days of much other smuggling were over too—of things contraband of truth, and justice, and honour) so it repays you for all the abortions to write one successful soothsay.

“Besides, ‘the moment,’ in affairs of this sort, is not necessarily the space of time comprised between

the two extreme vibrations of the sweep of the pendulum. The Moment of The Age may be an hour, a day, a month—in the 'Horologe of Eternity,' a year, a century, is barely a moment—is perhaps only the jar, the click, which the pendulum gives, at the end of its swing, to show that Time is still at work. I think, though, that I am here using Eternity not in its real sense. Eternity and Time have no connection in their real meanings—not more, at least, than Death and Immortality, than Light and Shadow !”

We whiffed away in silence for some short space. During the interval, the clock, as if reminded of its duties by Bob's remark, ticked audibly, and struck two; and a cock of early habits, in the Mews behind the College, with a ropy crow, hazarded an observation to the effect that morning was not far off.

Bob began again.

“And so, my dear old boy, give me a seed-pearl, and not a Koh-i-noor, clumsy and unmarketable—a finished and beautiful temple (be it ever so small), and not a mushroom-growth'd Exhibition glass-house run up in a few months.

“Give me a true—a perfect poem—harmonious in all points; not, as too many jingles of the day

are, 'a doleful matter merrily set down, or a very pleasant thing—and *sung lamentably!*' Dear Will Shakespeare, there is barely one thing in a lifetime that we cannot find a quotation for, from thy wonderful works! Bard and Prophet, True Man and Poet!"

A sudden light broke in upon me!

"But, Bob, you, who have so clearly, and well, shown all this to me; who have spoken so eloquently, and rationally, and truly, of the Poet's Art!—why do not *you* write a poem?"

"Because," said he, gravely—I'm not sure that he didn't sigh—"Because it is easier to criticise than to create:"—(what would the Reviewers think of that? thought I): "Because, besides learning—besides skill, and knowledge, and a code of rules—besides the Art—besides the machinery, the ropes, and the pulleys, the pen and the paper, there is something more required to make a Poet!"

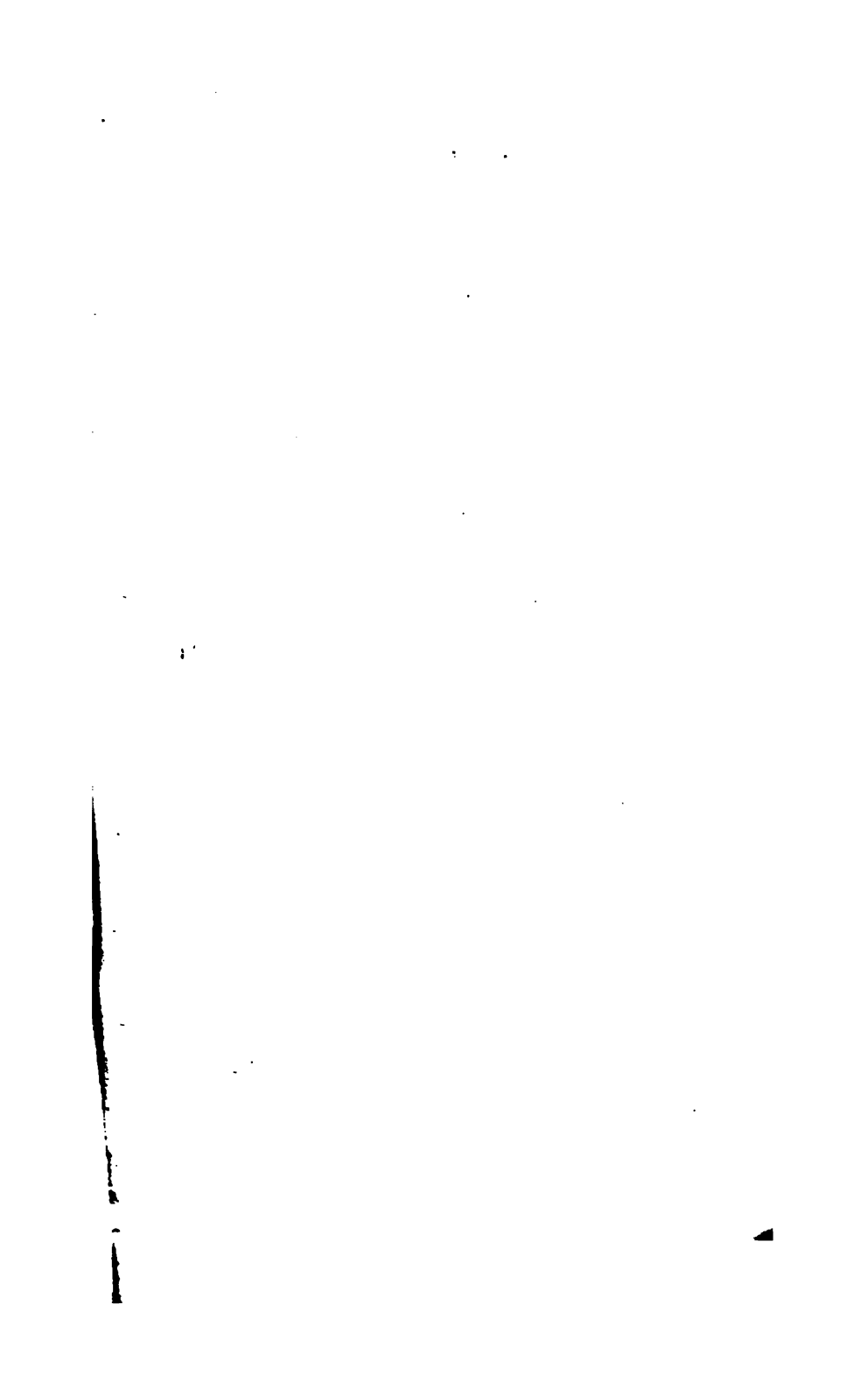
"Is it the divine afflatus of the old Delphians?"
I asked:—

But my paper is finished!

THE END.

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